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The Honourable Tony Whitford, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

Thursday, March 7, 2002

Members Present

Honourable Roger Allen, Honourable Jim Antoine, Mr. Bell, Mr. Braden, Mr. Delorey, Mr. Dent, Mrs. Groenewegen, Honourable Joe Handley, Honourable Stephen Kakfwi, Mr. Krutko, Mr. Lafferty, Ms. Lee, Mr. McLeod, Honourable Michael Miltenberger, Mr. Nitah, Honourable Jake Ootes, Mr. Roland, Honourable Vince Steen, Honourable Tony Whitford.

ITEM 1: PRAYER

-- Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Tony Whitford): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Please be seated. Good afternoon. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister responsible for Transportation, Mr. Handley.

ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS

Minister's Statement 30-14(5): Expanded Community Licensing Services

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to announce that as of April 1, 2002 the Department of Transportation will extend over-the-counter permanent document licensing services to the communities of Deline, Fort Good Hope, Fort McPherson, Fort Providence and Tuktoyaktuk. This would include driver licences, vehicle registrations and general identification cards.

Up until now, people in these communities have had to make do with temporary driver's licences and vehicle registrations until the permanent documents were processed and sent back to them. Now these communities will have the same licensing services that are available in the larger centres.

A direct electronic link to the motor vehicle information system and about \$75,000 worth of licensing equipment have made the improvements possible. The department expects to extend this improved service to the communities of Aklavik, Holman, Tulita and Fort Resolution in the near future.

The new and improved licensing services, Mr. Speaker, shows that so far as possible, the Department of Transportation tries to offer the same quality of services in smaller communities as it can in the larger ones. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Member's Statement on Non-Insured Health Benefits

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Government of the Northwest Territories, through the Department of Health and Social Services, administers two separate health benefit programs. One is the GNWT Supplementary Health Program, which is both funded and administered by the Government of the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, the programs include the Extended Health Benefits Program for seniors, the Chronic Disease Program, Metis Health Benefits and the Indigent Health Benefits Program. Mr. Speaker, the second health benefits program is funded by the federal government and is also administered by the Department of Health and Social Services. This program is for registered First Nations and Inuit, regardless of age, income or place of residence in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, the Department of Health and Social Services has policies for all of their programs that are modelled on their services and provisions of the NIHB program. This was done to ensure some equity amongst all residents of the Northwest Territories.

All these programs, Mr. Speaker, say that they are insurers of last resort. This means that if any resident has private health insurance through their employer or company, they are expected to use that insurance first.

Mr. Speaker, over the past several years, there have been many statements made by First Nations leaders expressing concern that there appears to be an erosion in the level of benefits allowed under the NIHB. Even Ministers of this government have expressed concern in this Assembly about an increase in the number of services being disallowed under NIHB guidelines, resulting in an increased cost to the Territories.

Mr. Speaker, a Dene elder cannot decide that the benefits are better under the extended health seniors' benefits program and apply for benefits under that policy. If he or she does not have private insurance, they must take what is allowed under the NIHB guidelines.

I am concerned, Mr. Speaker, that different rules are being used to determine eligibility for supplementary health benefits, especially in the area of medical transportation. Mr. Speaker, I will be asking the Minister questions on this issue during question period. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

Member's Statement on Rural Medical Travel Concerns

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. People in the communities of Aklavik, Fort McPherson and Tsiigehtchic often have to go to Inuvik for medical services and treatment, which is not available in our communities. As a result, patients from communities on the Dempster Highway or the winter road system are usually sent by taxi or shuttle bus, rather than by aircraft, to Inuvik.

Mr. Speaker, the trip from Aklavik or Fort McPherson can take up to two-and-a-half hours or more, and costs approximately \$200 one way by taxi. In the summer, you have to take the ferry from and to Tsiigehtchic and Fort McPherson, which runs once per hour and takes about 45 minutes to cross. For many patients, Mr. Speaker, the trip by taxi or private vehicle is not a great hardship, but there are those patients, especially those who are very frail, have a serious illness and are our elders, that have a hard time taking the long trip. Worse, Mr. Speaker, the patient has serious breathing problems and because of the trip being taken during the summer, it is very dusty travelling over a gravel road such as the Dempster Highway.

Mr. Speaker, Aklavik and Fort McPherson have scheduled air service to Inuvik twice daily during the break-up and freeze-up periods of the year. The cost from Aklavik is \$140 and from Fort McPherson it is about \$160 return. That trip takes about 25 minutes and 50 minutes from Fort McPherson back to Inuvik.

Mr. Speaker, I have received complaints from people who are asking the question, "Do we have a choice in regard to how travel is being done and who makes that choice, by road or by air?" Also, there are questions of the cost.

Is it clear, Mr. Speaker, that if it is necessary to go by road or by air, do the patients have a say in consideration of the comfort, the pain that the effect of travel on some of our patients may cause while travelling between Inuvik and our communities? Mr. Speaker, I see unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

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

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, colleagues. Mr. Speaker, while travelling to Inuvik to see a doctor with regard to pain that they may have, it would be better if we had a say in the process of how travel would be taken so that people who travel from our communities to our regional health centres can have a say with regard to how this takes place. Mr. Speaker, I will be following up on this with questions for the Minister later today. Thank you.

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

Member's Statement on Medical Travel Co-Payments

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss an issue with regard to medical travel. The issue I would like to bring to light, Mr. Speaker, is the issue of public awareness with regard to programs and services offered by the Department of Health and Social Services.

Mr. Speaker, we are all aware that at the time of initial diagnosis of a potential disease, or during a period of severe illness, patients are extremely anxious and uncertain. They are unsure of exactly what the diagnosis or illness entails. Mr. Speaker, very often, patients are just referred for medical travel without a thorough explanation of exactly what will transpire, never mind the impact of the potential costs involved.

Mr. Speaker, there are many assumptions made by the Department of Health and Social Services that people will just naturally have an understanding of everything involved when they have to travel for medical reasons or access a program or service offered by the Department of Health and Social Services.

I would like to state, Mr. Speaker, that the pamphlets, publications and brochures distributed by the Department of Health and Social Services are very well done. Of particular note is the seniors' handbook, which was produced in 2001.

However, Mr. Speaker, while these brochures and pamphlets are well done, there is no mention of a co-payment in any of these brochures. Many people are required to pay the co-payment of \$250 when they travel for medical reasons. The co-payment of \$250 is very cost prohibitive for a number of people.

Mr. Speaker, I believe the Department of Health and Social Services and their myriad of employees need to take a step back and simply view things from a user perspective. It is very simple, Mr. Speaker, for health care employees to recite policy over and over to people. It must be realized that these patients are distressed in many instances. A little information goes a long way.

Mr. Speaker, I would hate to think that a badly needed medical procedure would be passed over by a patient due to the fact that they were ill-informed, or worse yet, that the co-payment was too much of a financial burden for them.

Mr. Speaker, with all of the talk of the upcoming implementation of the department's action plan, it is my sincere hope that departmental officials have spent long hours discussing the best ways to get the pertinent information out to the people who require it the most, that being the patients.

Mr. Speaker, I feel strongly that...

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Delorey, your time for your Member's statement is over. Mr. Delorey.

MR. DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

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

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, colleagues. Mr. Speaker, I feel very strongly that we as legislators need to ensure that we have a strong, viable health care system. If there are constructive changes made to our health care system, we need to be assured that our programs are delivered in such a way as to ensure both accountability and efficiency. At the appropriate time, Mr. Speaker, I will have questions for the Minister. Thank you.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on Medical Travel Co-Payments

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My statement today is about medical travel co-payments. All residents in the Northwest Territories are eligible for territorial health insurance coverage. However, sometimes not all insured services are available in the communities or in the North. In these instances, people have to travel to the nearest centre that can provide the insured service.

Mr. Speaker, the cost of this medical travel is not always fully covered. Some residents have to pay a co-payment when they travel outside of their home communities for medical reasons. If you are a federal or territorial government employee, or if you work for one of the larger companies, Mr. Speaker, then you likely pay dues into a private insurance plan that will pick up the \$250 co-payment.

Mr. Speaker, registered Indians and Inuit registered in the Northwest Territories have their co-payment paid by the Government of Canada under the Non-Insured Health Benefits Program. The Extended Health Benefits Policy and the Metis Health Benefit Policy provides the co-payment for indigenous Metis residents as well as for seniors, infants under two years of age and those residents who are verified indigent.

Who is not covered, Mr. Speaker? Typically, non-aboriginal or non-indigenous aboriginal people who do not work for the larger companies or who do not pay into a private insurance plan. Many of these residents will qualify to have the co-payment waived if their illness is a specified illness listed under the Extended Health Benefits Program.

Mr. Speaker, it seems that for the apparently small number of residents who are left to pay the co-payment by themselves, this government ought to be able to find a way to reduce the cost to those individuals. Often these people are employed in low-paying service jobs and do not meet the means test to qualify as indigent, but yet they cannot readily afford a payment of \$250. This is especially so if more than one trip is necessary.

If the appropriate insured service is not available in the Northwest Territories, Mr. Speaker, then perhaps we should look at a mechanism to provide group insurance that includes all people who cannot afford a co-payment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on Medical Travel Co-Payments

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I too would like to address the issue of medical travel, and in particular, the co-payment required of our residents. This is one issue that I hear about frequently from a number of my constituents. That is because many of my constituents have been burdened with the expense of medical travel when they simply cannot afford it.

Medical needs and the subsequent cost to the patient are already too much for one to deal with. The co-payment is adding to many of our constituents' suffering. What is worse is it is usually the people who cannot really afford the expense who are having to deal with it.

Mr. Speaker, those who can afford it, higher income earners, are usually employed by larger companies who have medical benefits for their employees, so it is largely the middle and lower income earners who are not receiving these benefits through their employers or who otherwise qualify to have this co-payment covered, who are most affected.

Mr. Speaker, right now, unless it is an emergency, the patient must pay the co-payment charge before they get on the plane. That can be a difficult task for many. Not many people plan to have to travel for medical reasons, and \$250 is not something that many people have sitting in their bank accounts. Many people live from pay-day to pay-day. In fact, Mr. Speaker, it is often likely that if they have purchased medication or taken time off work, they are already struggling.

Mr. Speaker, even in conservative Ontario, they charge less for their co-payment to northern residents. Manitoba used to charge \$50 as the co-payment but, Mr. Speaker, they have dropped that. Other jurisdictions take the approach of capping the co-payment on an annual basis but here, patients are charged trip in, trip out, trip in, trip out. Mr. Speaker, people will often have recurring conditions that require more than one trip each way.

Mr. Speaker, we are setting our middle and lower income earners up for failure with the current policy. I urge the Minister to revisit this item with a view to eliminating this burden for our residents. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on Medical Travel Co-Payments

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in keeping with the theme of medical travel and extended health benefits, today I would like to articulate a gap in the support that our government provides for persons requiring medical attention outside of their home community.

At present, the government policy is that when you are referred for medical assessment or treatment, the patient is responsible for the first \$250 in travel associated with that referral. I will not go over all of the list of people who are excluded from having to pay that co-payment because my colleagues have already done that but, Mr. Speaker, if you are not included in these various groups that have been referred to, you are on your own.

The excluded persons in most cases are people working for small business in the private sector. Most such employers do not have access to readily affordable coverage for their employees.

Yellowknife, on the other hand, with its territorial hospital, has the good fortune of having many resident specialists who are qualified to diagnose and treat more than general practitioners, who generally serve the smaller communities. Another half of the population may be quite less affected by this co-payment because they live in Yellowknife and can be referred by their family physician to a number of different specialists. It affects them when a referral is required to the south, but I would

suggest that this is much less likely to occur than what is experienced by those living in communities like Hay River.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to see the Department of Health and Social Services determine how many people in the North are not covered by benefits through government or employee plans. When that number has been established, I would like to see the government facilitate a group insurance plan whereby those who are negatively impacted financially by this gap could elect to pay an affordable premium, which might cover even more than just medical travel. It could also cover things like dental, pharmaceutical and eyeglasses. It is the volume of people who would participate, which could make it affordable for the average working person or family.

Once a monthly premium for this insurance is established, small employers may even elect to pay it on behalf of their employees because their own numbers make the purchase of a plan too costly.

Mr. Speaker, this would not cost the government anything other than the administrative cost of acting as a facilitator. It would bring a level of fairness to Northerners who are not currently eligible for any other assistance. Later today, I will have questions for the Minister of Health and Social Services regarding this co-payment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on Non-Medical Travel Escorts

MR. NITAH: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. In keeping with the theme, Mr. Speaker, people in the Northwest Territories, especially people in the smaller communities, do not have access to medical services that most people take for granted. Just keeping a doctor's appointment often means a trip by airplane, a long drive, a boat across a lake or a snowmobile in the winter months. We have come to accept this as a way of life, Mr. Speaker.

What we also accept as our way of life, Mr. Speaker, is that families help each other when they are in need, especially in times of great sickness. Many of my constituents are elderly, and I am sad to say that over the past several years, many have passed away after suffering with cancer and other illnesses. Mr. Speaker, most of these people were sent out to hospitals and some have never returned. It is sad to know that in some cases, they did not have their families with them.

I understand, Mr. Speaker, that travel is expensive and that the health care system must be sustainable. However, Mr. Speaker, is it reasonable or compassionate to expect people to leave this world alone? The current medical travel policies do not provide for non-medical escorts for compassionate reasons, Mr. Speaker, yet I heard complaints from my constituents that sometimes, one family is denied an escort and another family is allowed more than one.

While there may be reasons for such approvals, Mr. Speaker, on the surface, it appears that some people are being shown favouritism. I will be following up with questions to the Minister at the appropriate time. Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on Utilization of Telehealth Technologies

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to start by sending greetings back home to my family. Mr. Speaker, although Inuvik does have a hospital, not all services and treatments are available. Many people have to travel to Yellowknife or to southern Canada for specialized services. In some instances, Mr. Speaker, a patient is treated by a physician in southern Canada and advised to come back to follow up in a few weeks or months. The follow-up appointment often consists of a three-hour trip and an overnight stay for a 15-minute appointment, where the specialist determines that the initial treatment was successful. I cannot help but think, Mr. Speaker, that we could be using telehealth technology in many of these situations.

Mr. Speaker, I will show an example to illustrate the point. One of my constituents broke his leg and was referred to an orthopaedic surgeon in Edmonton, where his broken leg was set. He was sent home to recover and a physician in Inuvik removed the cast after time. The specialist had stated that he wanted to see him again in three months, so an appointment was again arranged in southern Canada. The specialist reviewed an x-ray and pronounced the leg healed.

Mr. Speaker, there should be a way of using video conferencing technology and electronic transfer of diagnostic images to link the doctor and patient in the Northwest Territories with a specialist in southern Canada. Not only would it reduce the cost of travel, but it would also provide a better standard of care to the patients in the North.

I recognize, Mr. Speaker, that not all services and treatments lend themselves to this type of technology, but there are areas where we could focus attention and take a few small steps.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Health and Social Services recently presented the Northwest Territories Health Services Report, 2000. The report was prepared to inform interested parties about the patterns of utilization of health services in the Northwest Territories. Mr. Speaker, I think it would be useful to analyze that information with a view to determining what types of services might be provided or enhanced with the use of telehealth technology at the community level.

Many First Nations governments have projects underway where technology is used to enhance the care at the community level. These include televisitation for patients in the hospital, education and conferencing support to occupational and speech therapists who travel to provide services in the community. Mr. Speaker, I will be following up with questions on this topic at the appropriate time. Thank you.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on Medical Travel Information Systems

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I too would like to bring attention today to the issue of medical travel. More specifically, to the lack of, or inadequate information systems available in tracking who travels where and for what.

Mr. Speaker, I am one of those who believe that we have a very generous and compassionate Medical Travel Program. I also know from my own personal experience, and from talking to my constituents, that the program can be improved so as to make maximum use of the resources available and to use the dollar where it is most needed.

The most often mentioned problem with medical travel seems to be the inconsistent application, or the lack of uniformity on who travels where, for what. In talking to a local medical specialist, Mr. Speaker, I am advised that currently the information about who goes where for what is not consistently kept track of. In fact, whoever is approving the medical travel most often uses what is known as DCI codes, which basically means disease, condition, illness unknown.

While this is understandable, Mr. Speaker, because chances are, unless one gets the proper diagnosis upon the completion of medical appointment by travelling, this may not be known. We have to have an information system in place that does a proper follow-up, so the health authorities know the details of the travel and properly analyze the data, so proper responses could be taken in the future.

For example, Mr. Speaker, if so many people from one community travel for a knee problem or one similarly related illness or condition, a protocol could be worked out at the local level where a specialist could be sent to the community. At this moment, the lack of an information system does not allow that.

Mr. Speaker, I understand that there are limited medical information personnel in the department. I would advise the Minister to look into this further to make sure that this section is well resourced and well used. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on Community Medical Services

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Rae-Edzo used to have a cottage hospital that operated 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Before it was closed, many members of the communities that I represent were able to receive medical attention without travelling far away from home. Relatives could come and visit them and offer support in their time of need.

Mr. Speaker, having your family and loved ones around you should not be a luxury but often, families go broke when they have to travel to be with their loved ones, especially if these people are in the hospital for an extended stay. Sometimes, there is no place for families to stay in Yellowknife because they cannot afford hotels or find relatives they can stay with.

Mr. Speaker, when people have to travel to Yellowknife or Hay River for treatment or for an appointment, they often have to find a babysitter and make arrangements for an overnight stay, even though the appointment may be for only 15 minutes for a follow-up appointment. Mr. Speaker, what is this government doing to provide more health services in the smaller communities?

I will have questions for the Minister during question period, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on Support to Families of Long-Term Care Patients

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Also on the theme of medical travel, I can follow up very directly with the comments by my colleague from Tu Nedhe, who spoke of the need to move around the North by a number of means, by aircraft, by car, sometimes by boat or even snowmobile. Those are all major challenges for the patient but, Mr. Speaker, what I would like to talk about today is highlighting the needs of the families and the caregivers of patients.

In the NWT, Mr. Speaker, my understanding is that we have very limited facilities, if any at all, for the assistance of the families and caregivers to be with loved ones and with close friends when they are forced to be out of town for medical care. This is something that I know has great value and benefit to both the patient and their extended family and friends. To help serve this genuine need, there are institutions in southern Canada and other parts of the world. I think the one most familiar to Northerners would be Ronald McDonald House, which is a corporate system that provides exactly this kind of service.

Here in the North, our medical and our health care system is still growing and maturing. Mr. Speaker, I wanted to highlight the needs of caregivers and family members in support of patients who are out of town, either in various facilities in the NWT or perhaps in southern Canada. During question period, Mr. Speaker, I will be asking the Minister about what kind of information and what kind of assistance our government provides for this.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on Birthday Greetings to Dora Tourangeau

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the MLA for Thebacha, I as well have some questions about medical travel...

-- Laughter

...however, today I would like to recognize in this House a significant milestone of one of my constituents. As we speak,

there is a birthday party going on in the Northern Lights Special Care Home for Dora Tourangeau, who is 97 years old today.

-- Applause

On behalf of myself and the Members of this House, I would like to extend to her our best wishes. This fine lady, one of the respected elders of our community, has lived through a tremendous part of the history of the Northwest Territories, parts that none of us will ever know and can only read about in the history books. Some of this stuff we will never read about in the history books. She is a fine lady. I know her well and I would like to thank you for your support as we wish her the best on this, her 97th birthday. Thank you.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. I believe she is well known to Fort Smith folks as Auntie Dora, and happy birthday to her. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Antoine.

Member's Statement on Beavertail Jamboree Spring Carnival

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as the Member of the Legislative Assembly for Nahendeh, I would like to say a few words about this time of the year, when we are spending so much time in here and we look outside at the nice beautiful day and we do not enjoy it. However, other people in our communities do. With that, I just wanted to say that in my village of Fort Simpson, they are celebrating their spring carnival. It is called the Beavertail Jamboree. It has been going on all week and tonight is their official opening. It starts at 7:30 p.m. We all know that we sit until 7:30, therefore I will not be there. I would like to wish them the best in their carnival. There is a drum dance tonight. They have a number of events, such as talent shows, teen dances and adult dances.

On Saturday, they are having a snow drag race, which is becoming very famous in Fort Simpson. A lot of people bring their snow machines there from throughout the North and the south, and it is a major competition. That will also be a very good event. They have traditional games like sawing, log splitting, tea boiling and things that a lot of people here are very good at.

In the spirit of the event, the Village of Fort Simpson has declared Friday a half-day civic holiday so the people in the community could celebrate this great event. Unfortunately, I will not be there, so I would like to wish the people in Fort Simpson and the surrounding communities who go to this event all the best. Have a good time. Mahsi.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: You will be there in spirit, Mr. Antoine. Item 3, Members' statements. Item 4, reports of standing and special committees. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Mr. Dent.

ITEM 4: REPORTS OF STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Committee Report 5-14(5): Report on Medical Travel in the Northwest Territories

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a report on medical travel in the Northwest Territories presented by the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight.

Mr. Speaker, health care in the Northwest Territories continues to be a top priority for many residents and for this Legislature. As our population grows and ages, we can expect to see additional demands on the health system, particularly in the area of medical travel. Many insured services are not available in the smaller communities. Therefore, residents must travel to regional centres for services and/or treatment. Even in the regional centres, not all hospitals are fully equipped to provide all insured services, and in these instances, the Government of the Northwest Territories has a medical travel policy that applies to eligible persons.

Mr. Speaker, the policy states that:

The Government of the Northwest Territories will provide medical travel benefits to eligible persons in the Northwest Territories who must travel in order to access necessary and appropriate health services.

That is from Medical Travel Policy 49.06.1, statement of policy.

Mr. Speaker, the policy further states that the Government of the Northwest Territories will adhere to the following principles in implementing this policy:

- 1) The Canadian health care system is based on universal access to insured health services;
- 2) The cost of medical travel should not be an economic barrier to insured health services; and
- 3) The Government of the Northwest Territories is committed to reducing the economic barriers to insured health services.

Mr. Speaker, that is from Medical Travel Policy 49.06.2.

Mr. Speaker, members have raised concerns respecting the application of various aspects of the policy, including eligibility, provision and level of benefits on medical travel, inter-community transportation, escorts, patient boarding and local transportation of indigent patients.

The Standing Committee on Social Programs, in its report on the review of the 2002-2003 Main Estimates, had this to say about medical travel, and I quote:

The Standing Committee on Social Programs has commented on their concerns about the application of the department's medical travel policy in past reports to this Assembly. Many of the complaints that MLAs get from their constituents are about the uneven

application of the medical travel policy by the individual health authorities.

As well, because many extended families have relatives in different health authorities, they talk about the differences of application for each authority. The lack of perceived consistency breeds resentment between communities and families.

Members of the committee look forward to the results of the review of the extended health benefits that is currently underway. There is hope that as a result of this study, a clear, concise and evenly applied policy on medical travel can be developed and communicated to the residents of the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, members of the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight have chosen to use the theme of medical travel in their Members' statements and questions today. Mr. Speaker, that concludes the report of the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight on medical travel in the Northwest Territories.

Therefore, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Hay River North, that Committee Report 5-14(5) be received and adopted. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. There is a motion on the floor. The motion is in order. All those in favour? Thank you. All those opposed? Thank you. The motion is carried. Committee Report 5-14(5) has been received and adopted.

Item 4, reports of standing and special committees. Item 5, returns to oral questions. Item 6, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Item 7, oral questions. The honourable Member for Deh Cho, Mr. McLeod.

ITEM 7: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 161-14(5): Non-Medical Travel Escorts

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health and Social Services. Mr. Speaker, our communities are small and close-knit in the North and people share their experiences. They discuss issues such as health and medical travel. They compare notes.

I would like to ask the Minister if he can tell me what the criteria or the approval process is for non-medical escorts. Who has the authority to approve escorts? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return to Question 161-14(5): Non-Medical Travel Escorts

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Member pointed out an issue that we have recognized, which is the lack of consistency of the application of this policy. There is a medical travel unit in Stanton. As well, it is administered through Inuvik, Yellowknife and Fort Smith. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 161-14(5): Non-Medical Travel Escorts

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister has indicated that there are some problems in the Non-Medical Travel Program. I understand there are two different programs. One is federally funded and the other one is GNWT funded. I would like to ask the Minister, can he tell me if the criteria for the escorts is the same for both programs? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 161-14(5): Non-Medical Travel Escorts

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as far as I know, they are the same.

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

Supplementary to Question 161-14(5): Non-Medical Travel Escorts

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask the Minister, as the administrator of the fund, does the department have the authority to grant approval on behalf of the NIHB program, the Non-Insured Health Benefits Program? It is my understanding that there is a requirement for prior approval for this program. Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 161-14(5): Non-Medical Travel Escorts

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am not quite sure of the question. I know that we administer the NIHB program and there are prior approvals required in the case of some procedures and some specific issues. We use the chart of benefits as provided by NIHB. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 161-14(5): Non-Medical Travel Escorts

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just recently, I had the opportunity to review the medical travel policy and the criteria for non-medical travel escorts. I was surprised to find that there is a provision for a second non-medical escort. It is only provided in rare situations. I have requested compassionate travel and different types of approvals before and have never been successful. What are the circumstances that the Minister will approve a second escort under?

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

Further Return to Question 161-14(5): Non-Medical Travel Escorts

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, those are looked at on a case-by-case basis. It is an approval that is granted by the deputy. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Item 7, oral questions. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

Question 162-14(5): Rural Medical Travel Concerns

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, regarding my Member's statement on travel and transportation from communities to regional centres and who makes those decisions, I would like to ask the Minister of Health and Social Services, can he tell me the policy on how people from communities I represent are transported to the hospital, say in Inuvik?

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

Return to Question 162-14(5): Rural Medical Travel Concerns

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, clearly the intent is to ensure the patient being referred is transported to the nearest medical centre in the most efficient way possible. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 162-14(5): Rural Medical Travel Concerns

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to know who makes the decision about what type of transportation is used. Is it going to be road transportation, air transportation? Who makes that decision?

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

Further Return to Question 162-14(5): Rural Medical Travel Concerns

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it would be, as far as I am aware, the call of the people on the ground where the patient is and where the requirement is. The determination would be made between the community and the facility they are being transported to. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 162-14(5): Rural Medical Travel Concerns

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think one of the fundamental problems we see in our small communities is the lack of consistency in services, like doctors

and specialists, coming into our communities. Right now, it is pretty apparent that this medical travel is a necessity to basically get to a doctor or a specialist.

Could the Minister tell me, is there anything in the works to ensure that we will have a means of transporting people without having to follow this policy? If it is apparent that it is a policy that is the only means of getting that service, will that be allowed without having to go through this policy?

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

Further Return to Question 162-14(5): Rural Medical Travel Concerns

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, very clearly, we have recognized that there are issues with this particular policy. In fact, with the whole supplementary health benefits program. That is why we are taking the steps to do the review I indicated during the review of the main estimates.

The issues raised by my colleagues in their Members' statements, the co-payments, the medical travel, the coordination issues, the lack of consistency, are all things that we are going to be looking at. We are going to be coming back to the Legislature and the committees, as well as the health boards and other stakeholders, to make sure we come up with a policy that better reflects the realities we face today. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 162-14(5): Rural Medical Travel Concerns

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was not too sure if that was a yes, maybe or we are not too sure, but my next question flip-flops my original question. If you are not able to ensure that travel will be a means of providing medical service, will you increase the amount of doctors and specialists that go into our communities? Instead of having a doctor go in once a month, they go in two or three times a month so we do not have to continue to transport our people to the regional centres?

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

Further Return to Question 162-14(5): Rural Medical Travel Concerns

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in addition to trying to improve the Medical Travel Policy and the other supplementary health benefits programs, we are also, through the action plan, looking at the service model we are going to use and the service levels in the communities.

We recognize once again, very clearly, that the service into the smaller communities with specialists, dentists and doctors would be better if it could be improved. We are also trying to

make sure that we staff the existing vacancies amongst doctors.

I would like to say that yes, we are attempting to improve both of those areas. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Item 7, oral questions. The honourable Member for Hay River North, Mr. Delorey.

Question 163-14(5): Medical Travel Public Awareness

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I alluded to earlier in my Member's statement, the Department of Health and Social Services has a number of brochures outlining current programs provided under the auspices of the department. This does provide some information to patients having to travel outside of their home communities for treatment, but I think more needs to be done in the area of accurate information sharing with regard to medical travel.

Would the Minister please advise where in the brochures put out by the department is there mention of a co-payment for patients having to travel outside of their home communities for medical attention? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return to Question 163-14(5): Medical Travel Public Awareness

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, based on my colleague's Member's statement and his review of the brochures that he commented on in terms of their quality, with the exception of the one gap that nowhere is the \$250 mentioned, I would say that it is not mentioned. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 163-14(5): Medical Travel Public Awareness

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Would the Minister please advise how the Department of Health and Social Services deals with a patient who is above the indigent income level but given the circumstances, just cannot afford the co-payment of \$250 that is required for medical travel outside of their home communities? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 163-14(5): Medical Travel Public Awareness

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, very clearly, the policy is there to be followed. I do not believe that in any case, our patients and residents have been denied any kind of critical medical treatment, but the policy is there to be followed. There are probably some exceptions. Are there specific exceptions? I would have to get

the Member to give me the specific instances and we would have to look at that. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 163-14(5): Medical Travel Public Awareness

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, could the Minister inform us what level of involvement private citizens have had as stakeholders in the current review of the action plan being administered by the department? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 163-14(5): Medical Travel Public Awareness

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the action plan is based on about eight to ten years of work of consultants, special committees, Ministers' forums, where there were thousands of people interviewed and recommendations made. It is also based on input from the health boards and authorities, the department itself and various other stakeholders within the Northwest Territories.

The action plan that was developed had significant input. We are also ensuring, through the new structures, policies and approaches with the health boards and authorities, that the department and the authorities and the communities they represent are at the table. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 163-14(5): Medical Travel Public Awareness

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Minister may have alluded to this before, but would the Minister commit to reviewing the current brochures produced by the Department of Health and Social Services, in view of having more information disseminated to the public? Specifically in the area of co-payments for patients having to travel outside of their home communities for medical travel. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 163-14(5): Medical Travel Public Awareness

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the Member for his perception, observations and suggestions. Yes, we will definitely consider and deal with the issue he has identified as a gap as we look at the overall supplementary health care programs. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Item 7, oral questions. The honourable Member for Yellowknife South, Mr. Bell.

Question 164-14(5): Third Party Medical Insurance

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Health and Social Services as well. It is about third-party insurance. I am wondering if there is any reason why this government cannot set up a scheme to act as a third-party insurer for people who are not eligible under any other plan? Thank you.

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

Return to Question 164-14(5): Third Party Medical Insurance

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I and the department are prepared to look at any options that would improve health care services to all of our people and eliminate any gaps or barriers that may be there, perceived or otherwise. Is there a particular impediment? I am willing to look at anything that the Member, the Social Programs Committee or this Legislature would suggest as we look at this particular component of the health care system. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 164-14(5): Third Party Medical Insurance

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am glad to hear that the Minister is willing to look at that, because I believe we are already a third-party insurer. If you look at the example of the Metis Health Benefits Policy. That is a perfect example, Mr. Speaker. Would the Minister agree that we are already in the business of providing third-party insurance in some cases? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 164-14(5): Third Party Medical Insurance

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would agree that we provide services to all people in the Northwest Territories in one form or another, and that the issue my colleague raised is one I am committed to look at. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 164-14(5): Third Party Medical Insurance

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I guess what I am saying is, rather than having different policies to cover Metis, seniors, children under two, the indigent, I am hoping this Minister would look at one policy that would provide health benefits

assistance to residents who do not qualify. Would the Minister look at amalgamating these programs and expanding them to include everybody? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 164-14(5): Third Party Medical Insurance

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, very clearly, the intent of this review is to come up with a better way of providing this service. I look forward to the results of the committee doing the work, the working group doing this review, and what they bring back.

My colleague has raised some very important points. As we speak, we all know there are officials in the department making note of the concerns. As well, we will be looking at Hansard to make sure we have all of the concerns correctly. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 164-14(5): Third Party Medical Insurance

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just quickly, I am wondering if the Minister can tell us when we can expect the results of this review? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 164-14(5): Third Party Medical Insurance

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, given the difficulty we have had, having put out two RFPs and the fact that we are now having to do this internally as the best way to do this, I would hope that by the fall session we would have a package, if not before, to put before the Social Programs Committee and this House. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Item 7, oral questions. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Mr. Dent.

Question 165-14(5): Medical Travel Co-Payment

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health and Social Services. It also relates to the issue of medical travel. Mr. Speaker, if a person cannot afford the co-payment, where do they go for help? Thank you.

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

Return to Question 165-14(5): Medical Travel Co-Payment

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Indigent Health Benefits Program is there to assist those who are not able to afford that particular cost. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 165-14(5): Medical Travel Co-Payment

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister did not answer the question. Where do they go for help? How does someone become certified as indigent? Do they have to be living on the small basket of food that we saw out in the Great Hall yesterday, living in abject poverty before they can qualify? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 165-14(5): Medical Travel Co-Payment

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we will be using similar criteria in terms of what I believe is what is done with income support. Abject poverty and the terms my colleague used are not ones I would necessarily agree with. It is a process to ensure that no one falls through the safety net and if there is a gap, hopefully we can identify that and close it. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 165-14(5): Medical Travel Co-Payment

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, is there any distinction between the emergency medical travel and non-emergency medical travel when it comes to the co-payment? Do we charge the co-payment in both situations?

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

Further Return to Question 165-14(5): Medical Travel Co-Payment

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would presume that in the event of an emergency, the patient's health and well-being are dealt with first and foremost, and that they would sort through those other issues at a later date. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 165-14(5): Medical Travel Co-Payment

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just for clarification, and if the Minister cannot absolutely confirm it today, maybe he could provide the information later to the House, but I think I heard him say that in an emergency situation, we would not charge the patient up-front, but that we would pursue the patient after the fact to get the co-payment back. Is that the case?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Two issues there. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Health and Social Services, Mr. Miltenberger.

Further Return to Question 165-14(5): Medical Travel Co-Payment

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, what I am saying is that we have a system of universal health care and, unlike the Americans, where they reach for your wallet, your credit cards and your medical coverage slip, our first concern is the well-being of the patient. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Item 7, oral questions. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Nitah.

Question 166-14(5): Non-Medical Travel Co-Payment

MR. NITAH: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Health and Social Services. As the Minister knows, not all terminally ill people can be given comfort and support in their last days in their home communities. In these instances, is there any travel assistance available to families so they can be with their loved ones in their last days? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return to Question 166-14(5): Non-Medical Travel Co-Payment

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, under the current program, the area of compassionate travel was eliminated about four years ago. At that particular date and time, it was administered under the Welfare Program by the social workers. That was removed and has not been reinstated. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 166-14(5): Non-Medical Travel Co-Payment

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there are medical escorts available for these people and sometimes there is a second medical escort made available. Can the Minister tell us what criteria is used to approve multiple escorts to travel with patients? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 166-14(5): Non-Medical Travel Co-Payment

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the criteria is generally medically based. We respond to the advice and direction of the practitioners and people involved in doing the referral. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 166-14(5): Non-Medical Travel Co-Payment

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, compassion is becoming a medical question. That is not good, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, certainly, if possible, terminally ill patients would like to be around their families in their home communities. Unfortunately, that is not always the case and cannot always be the case. Is the department doing anything to improve palliative care for patients in their home communities?

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

Further Return to Question 166-14(5): Non-Medical Travel Co-Payment

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the communities, nurses have been given courses in palliative care and how to deal with terminally ill patients. In the larger centres where they have facilities, like Yellowknife, they have an excellent group of people and a level of resources to help people in their final days.

In the small communities, especially where there are nursing stations, the nurses there, for the most part, are given that kind of training. Every attempt is made to work with the families to make sure that the final days of the terminally ill are as painless and as dignified as possible. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 166-14(5): Non-Medical Travel Co-Payment

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there is no dignity or compassion in letting people leave this world alone. On that matter, Mr. Speaker, will the Minister commit to reviewing the policy with a view to including the means to allow compassionate travel for families of terminally ill patients who are in regional centres or in Edmonton, where we use medical facilities most often, Mr. Speaker? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 166-14(5): Non-Medical Travel Co-Payment

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I will restate the commitment I made earlier during question period that yes, the issues raised in the Members' statements, the issues that have been raised through questions, the issues that have been raised through the main estimates and over the last number of years, will all be considered as we look at this particular program area. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Item 7, oral questions. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Question 167-14(5): Co-Payment for Maternity Patients

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions today are for the Minister of Health and Social Services. In my Member's statement, I talked about the co-payment, which is burdensome for people from Hay River. In fact, \$250 is the full cost of travel to Yellowknife when they get referred. Two hundred and fifty dollars is the full price of airfare to Yellowknife and back.

One group that is particularly hard hit by this under the current medical services available in Hay River now and for quite some time, are maternity patients. Right now, if you are in Hay River and you are expecting a baby, you are expected to come to Yellowknife three weeks in advance. Normally, people who are referred might come for a test and leave, might come and be admitted to the hospital for surgery and then leave, but maternity patients have to come to Yellowknife a full three weeks in advance of having their baby.

There are all kinds of costs that could be incurred by them. They have to pay the \$250 co-payment. Then they get here and they have to pay for accommodation. They have to pay for transportation while they are here. They might have to pay for childcare for the children they have left behind. They are away from their family while they are having a baby.

I am wondering, is there anything the Minister could do to specifically address the issue of maternity patients? This is very costly time. We pride ourselves on a health care system unlike the United States, where it costs thousands of dollars to have a baby. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: I just want to remind Members that Members' statements are over. When asking questions, the preamble should not be too long. The question was asked. Shorten the preambles, shorten the answers. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Health and Social Services, Mr. Miltenberger.

Return to Question 167-14(5): Co-Payment for Maternity Patients

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I share the Member's concern and I share the Member's interest in having, for example, birthing services available in communities other than Yellowknife. I have also committed and will commit to her as well to look at this particular issue. I know it affects many, many women from my community as well. In fact, my daughter will be travelling here in a few months to make me a grandfather once again, of which I am very proud.

It is an issue and I realize the burden of cost it places on families. It is one that I as well am interested in addressing. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 167-14(5): Co-Payment for Maternity Patients

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I did not quite get the answer, but let me state the question again. Would the Minister agree to waiving the co-

payment for maternity patients due to the amount of time they have to spend here in Yellowknife and the additional costs associated with coming here to have a baby? Will he waive the cost of the co-payment? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 167-14(5): Co-Payment for Maternity Patients

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will seriously consider the Member's request. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Item 7, oral questions. The honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, Mr. Roland.

Question 168-14(5): Telehealth Services in the Northwest Territories

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question as well will be directed to the Minister responsible for Health and Social Services. In line with my Member's statement, can the Minister tell me what telehealth services are currently available in the Northwest Territories?

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

Return to Question 168-14(5): Telehealth Services in the Northwest Territories

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there are sites currently in Stanton, Fort Smith and Inuvik, and there are sites to be coming on stream in Holman, Deline, Fort Simpson and Hay River. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 168-14(5): Telehealth Services in the Northwest Territories

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am aware of that, and it is good to see we are bringing in more and more facilities in different locations. I was really looking for information on what kind of services the health professionals are using in these facilities. Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 168-14(5): Telehealth Services in the Northwest Territories

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the equipment used is computerized and tied into monitors allowing the transmittal of information, as well as parties in the two separate communities to be able to talk to each other, tests that are being done. For example, you could examine a patient's ear in Inuvik and have that on a screen in Yellowknife for the doctor to examine. It is a technology that is expanding rapidly and it is one that, I agree with the Member, has significant potential. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 168-14(5): Telehealth Services in the Northwest Territories

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there are some examples of what other groups are doing. For example, Fort Chipewyan in Alberta has a First Nations Telehealth Research Project currently underway that provides a teleconsultation service, so patients from the community hospitalized in Fort McMurray can visit families and friends in Fort Chipewyan. This is the kind of example I am looking for, Mr. Speaker. What are we doing? What kind of services are actually being provided through telehealth? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 168-14(5): Telehealth Services in the Northwest Territories

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, patients in the communities that have telehealth are connected into Yellowknife or to other southern jurisdictions, depending on what the issue is and the kind of care or advice they need. I am very interested in my colleague's comment about the use for patients to in fact visit with family, a very common sense kind of situation. It has never really come up but it is definitely one that makes considerable sense to me. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 168-14(5): Telehealth Services in the Northwest Territories

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister inform us what programs or services they are looking to deliver through the telehealth service facilities that are being established? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 168-14(5): Telehealth Services in the Northwest Territories

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The services are diagnostic and are consultative. There is consultation that can take place on mental health issues. There is diagnostic appointments and work that can be done with doctors, with dermatologists, with leg breaks and those kinds of medical situations. There is a whole host of particular services that can be provided, as well as the very excellent suggestion that he raised from Fort Chipewyan and Fort McMurray. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Item 7, oral questions. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

Question 169-14(5): Medical Travel Information Systems

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question today goes to the Minister responsible for Health and Social Services as well. Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned earlier, I want to ask him about the information system that is available to track medical travel. Mr. Speaker, I know that in his previous life, when he was on this side of the floor, he talked often about the importance of blue chip information in order to make good decisions.

I am being told by the specialists out there that the health care system is working in an information vacuum as to who is travelling where and for what. Is the Minister aware of that and what is he doing about it? Thank you.

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

Return to Question 169-14(5): Medical Travel Information Systems

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my concern, interest and recognition of the absolute necessity for blue chip information has not changed since moving into this chair. In fact, it has probably been heightened.

I recognize the current systems we have are not adequate. Very clearly, the perception I had when I sat with my colleagues on the other side has been confirmed. Health and Social Services itself recognizes that our information systems are significantly lagging. We are taking steps, if you recollect from the main estimates, to put millions of dollars into our information technology systems.

We also recognize the further issues. What do we do with this information? We have to better coordinate medical travel and we have to better coordinate people coming into the system, travelling through the system and leaving the system so that we make it as effective, as efficient and as painless a journey and experience as possible. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 169-14(5): Medical Travel Information Systems

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, could the Minister then give us more information about the millions he has allocated to his main budget? How much of that will be on the information system for medical travel? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 169-14(5): Medical Travel Information Systems

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we are going to be considerably upgrading the child welfare information system, our medical data information systems and all the other systems we have within our

department. The amount of money is, as my colleague said, in the millions. It is in the main estimates. If I could find it under all my other briefing material on medical travel, I could probably dig it out for the Member, but I will commit to get that figure for her. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 169-14(5): Medical Travel Information Systems

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like the Minister to know that there is a system in place already in the department, but we need to look at a system that looks specifically, in great detail, why people travel, to where and how. Mr. Speaker, I could tell him that his recent report about medical services admits that they have a lack of information. Could I get the Minister to commit to spending the budget that he has on information systems specifically to medical travel? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 169-14(5): Medical Travel Information Systems

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, that is why I made the point in my reply to the Member that very clearly, the department consists of more than Yellowknife. We have a very significant issue to deal with to make sure we tie together all the regions and communities into Yellowknife and the commitment is clear. We have come to this House with a budget that identifies millions of dollars for information technology and we will be spending the money in the area in which we requested it. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Final supplementary, Ms. Lee.

Supplementary to Question 169-14(5): Medical Travel Information Systems

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Minister for that answer because it indicates to me that he has completely misunderstood my question. My question was not to do with setting up a huge computer system in Yellowknife. I am talking about information on why people leave communities, such as Aklavik or anywhere, to go where? Where do they go and for what? Whether they go to Edmonton, Yellowknife or Hay River, we do not have a system in place that does the proper follow-up so that we could properly manage the medical travel. Would he acknowledge that he has misunderstood my question and that he will get me the proper answer? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. I am not sure what the question was. You have asked several and you aimed in several directions. I will just ask the Members, for the final supplementary, be a little more specific. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Health and Social Services, if you could figure what the question was, Mr. Miltenberger.

Further Return to Question 169-14(5): Medical Travel Information Systems

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am a reasonable man and I will be glad to meet the Member halfway. Assuming that I misunderstood her question, then I can only assume that she misunderstood my answer.

-- Laughter

I will acknowledge that our systems need improvement and that we have to better track people coming into the system, where they go, how they are travelling and what kind of services they need, to make sure the services they need are there and that when they travel, it is not a traumatic experience. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Item 7, oral questions. The honourable Member for North Slave, Mr. Lafferty.

Question 170-14(5): Community Medical Services

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Health and Social Services. I would like to ask the Minister what his department is doing to see if some of the health services and facilities that people in my riding once had can be provided in the communities, so we can eliminate medical travel and give it to the communities that need it over here. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return to Question 170-14(5): Community Medical Services

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the action plan, we are looking at a service delivery model that will hopefully address some of the issues raised by my colleague, Mr. Lafferty, as well as other Members from small communities in terms of access to services from specialists, doctors and dentists in their communities. Some under NIHB, for example, have not been raised for many, many years in terms of days of service, even though the populations have grown.

We are also committed to reviewing supplementary programs, for example, to try and improve that service. We are doing many things to try to improve the system and services to all people. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 170-14(5): Community Medical Services

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On any given day, if you were to visit at the Stanton hospital, you will see more than one of my constituents getting care or are there for an extended time. I would like to ask the Minister if he can look at his own document, where he says the smaller communities have all the elders, then he can look at putting facilities in to take care of them when they get older and sick. Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 170-14(5): Community Medical Services

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there is, in our communities, significant investment in infrastructure for health and social services, including dealing with elderly and the sick. If there are specific issues that have to be addressed or services to be enhanced because of an over demand on the system in any given community, we are definitely interested and committed to look at that. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 170-14(5): Community Medical Services

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In most cities in Canada, families can get to the hospital without too much expense to be with a sick relative. Here in the North, sometimes they cannot afford to travel to the hospital, especially if it is in southern Canada. What are you doing to help families be together with their family members in times of illness? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 170-14(5): Community Medical Services

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have clearly recognized that this is one of the issues that necessitated the review of the Supplementary Health Programs. We have committed to that review. It is underway. That will be one of the issues seriously considered, so that when we come back to this Assembly, hopefully we will have done our work in such a way that it will get the support it needs from Cabinet and from this Assembly to be accepted. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 170-14(5): Community Medical Services

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I said before, if you were to go into Stanton, you will see a number of my constituents there. I would like to ask the Minister if he can look at all the many patients that have come from the Dogrib region and are being taken care of in Yellowknife and the travel costs. Can he look at putting a facility in my region? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 170-14(5): Community Medical Services

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I will commit to look at those numbers. I also make the offer in this House that I look forward to at some point in the not-too-distant future, travelling with the Member for the North Slave to his communities, so we can see firsthand the issues he speaks of and look at creative and practical ways of dealing with the issues he has raised. Thank you.

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

Question 171-14(5): Families of Long-Term Care Patients

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health and Social Services. When sickness causes a Northerner to leave home for treatment, what assistance does our government provide for a family member or caregiver to be with them? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return to Question 171-14(5): Families of Long-Term Care Patients

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, that would depend on the particular circumstances. If the escort is deemed necessary, then the costs are covered to make sure the escort travels with the patient, and when they get to where they have to go, they are accommodated if it is in Yellowknife or points south. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 171-14(5): Families of Long-Term Care Patients

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What are the criteria that deems whether a patient needs to be escorted? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 171-14(5): Families of Long-Term Care Patients

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, that determination is made by the people dealing with the patient, in terms of the kind of condition, the situation, the age of the patient, those kinds of factors. That determination is made based on that type of criteria. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 171-14(5): Families of Long-Term Care Patients

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So then I am wondering, Mr. Speaker, it sounds like those criteria are fairly rigid. Is there any willingness to look at providing for a caregiver or a family member to accompany a patient, regardless of the severity or the clinical necessity for them to be escorted? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 171-14(5): Families of Long-Term Care Patients

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there is a willingness on my part and the part of the department to look at the issue of compassionate travel as we do the review of supplementary health programs. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 171-14(5): Families of Long-Term Care Patients

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Speaker, I welcome that answer. As is the case in other parts of Canada, I am wondering if the government would also explore avenues or options to potentially involve the private sector or perhaps charitable foundations in assisting in facilities or expenses for family members or caregivers. Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 171-14(5): Families of Long-Term Care Patients

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I heard in my colleague's Member's statement mention of facilities such as Ronald McDonald House. I think that is a fine demonstration of what happens when the private sector takes an active interest in that kind of service. I know the Stanton Foundation here has done significant fundraising for medical equipment and they brought in many significant corporate sponsors and they have done a good job fundraising. Of course, as a department, as a government, we are very interested in that kind of partnership and collaboration. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Item 7, oral questions. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

Question 172-14(5): Medical Travel Information Systems

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question again goes to the Minister of Health and Social Services. To meet the Minister halfway and to not cause any misunderstanding in my question, perhaps I could give an example of what I mean by the kind of blue chip information that I think the department should have.

I was talking to an orthopaedic surgeon, Mr. Speaker, in town and he really believes the medical travel system could improve vastly if we had better information. Not to the extent of how old people are, their gender, or what communities they come from but, for example, how many people from Aklavik are travelling to Yellowknife to see orthopaedic surgeons for knee problems? Or maybe just bone problems? Would it be better for the surgeon to go to Aklavik two or three times a year? Right now, we do not have that sort of information system.

Does the Minister understand my question now? Is he interested in looking at that? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Two questions there. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Health and Social Services, Mr. Miltenberger.

Return to Question 172-14(5): Medical Travel Information Systems

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would be interested and happy to sit down tomorrow and go over Hansard with the Member. I believe we would see that we are talking about the same thing. That yes, I agree our information systems need work. The type of information that we have access to right now does not meet all of the needs we have. As a system, we are not as effective or efficient as we can be in terms of doing our job, because our information systems are lacking, as the Member has so eloquently pointed out. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 172-14(5): Medical Travel Information Systems

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Does that mean that he understands the concern I am raising is not a Yellowknife issue but is for all of the Territories? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 172-14(5): Medical Travel Information Systems

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I know that as a Member of this Legislature, my colleague, in the broadest sense, has the interests of all of the members of the Northwest Territories at heart when she raises her issues. In this case, she has raised a systems issue that applies to the whole Northwest Territories. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Item 7, oral questions. Item 8, written questions. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

-- Interjection

MR. SPEAKER: I am sorry. Mr. Braden, you have the floor.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am sorry. Perhaps I raised my arm a bit too late to catch your attention. I had an oral question.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, I did not see your hand go up. Item 7, oral questions. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

Question 173-14(5): Medical Travel Efficiencies

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will continue a line of questioning to the Minister responsible for Health and Social Services. It is somewhat associated with medical travel, at least travel in general.

In this age of heightened security requirements, more and more passengers are being required to carry photo identification. For some members of our society, Mr. Speaker, especially senior citizens and very young people, photo IDs are not generally encountered. Does this government have some approach to assisting these members of society with general photo ID as an assist to more efficient travel? Thank you.

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

Return to Question 173-14(5): Medical Travel Efficiencies

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, earlier today, the Minister for Transportation announced enhanced services for those kinds of documentation that may be required. Is there a government-wide policy to assist people with getting photo ID? I cannot really say. I know that on our medicare cards, no pictures are required. Are we looking at coming to the day where we need some sort of general identification, photo ID? I think we are moving that way. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 173-14(5): Medical Travel Efficiencies

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The provision of facilities to provide these kinds of cards is getting widespread and that is great news. There is a cost to this though. I am wondering if this is an area the government could look at providing for those people who normally would not need it or could not afford it. Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 173-14(5): Medical Travel Efficiencies

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as a government and as a department, we are of course sensitive to the issue of requiring services of people who may not be in a position to afford to pay for that service, which is why we have committed to looking at the supplementary health care benefits.

If the issue of photo ID falls under that category, where some people may not be able to afford this required service, then of course we will look, as a government, at a way to try and address that so no people are left untended in this area. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Item 7, oral questions. I erred when I went back to the other Member there. I had already called the other item and technically, we should have sought unanimous consent to go back to that item. I just wanted to make that correction. Members must indicate very clearly to the Chair their intention. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Mr. Dent.

Question 174-14(5): Public Listing of all Crown Corporations Contracts

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Honourable Joe Handley. Yesterday, I made a statement talking about the contracts process and the contracts listing. I would like to ask the Minister if he will work with the consolidated entities for which he is responsible, like the Workers' Compensation Board and the Northwest Territories Power Corporation, to ensure that their contract payments over \$5,000 are publicly listed, just as those for the Government of the Northwest Territories are every quarter? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Finance, Mr. Handley.

Return to Question 174-14(5): Public Listing of all Crown Corporations Contracts

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I do not believe there is any requirement in the legislation for them to do that, but I will certainly take that matter up with the board and, first of all, determine if they are willing to do it voluntarily. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 174-14(5): Public Listing of all Crown Corporations Contracts

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Minister. I think that public scrutiny of contract payments is an important process of an open and accountable government. Those entities that this government is tied to, whether Crown corporations or boards like the Workers' Compensation Board, need to also have everything open. The Minister has said he will discuss this with those boards. Will he commit to getting back to us within the next week as to what their response is? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Finance, Mr. Handley.

Further Return to Question 174-14(5): Public Listing of all Crown Corporations Contracts

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do not believe that either the Workers' Compensation Board or the Power Corporation, the two that I am responsible for, are meeting within the next week. I am not sure that I can get back to them. I will take the issue up with the chairperson though and they may be willing to do a phone poll or something. I cannot really guarantee it since they are not likely meeting. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. The time for question period has ended. Item 8, written questions. Item 9, returns to written questions. Item 10, replies to the opening address. Item 11, petitions. Item 12, reports of committees on the review of

ills. Item 13, tabling of documents. Item 14, notices of motion. Item 15, notices of motion for the first reading of bills. Item 16, motions. Item 17, first reading of bills. The honourable Minister responsible for Finance, Mr. Handley.

ITEM 17: FIRST READING OF BILLS

Bill 9: Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 3, 2001-2002

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker,

I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, that Bill 9, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 3, 2001-2002, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. There is a motion on the floor. The motion is in order. All those in favour? Thank you. All those opposed? Thank you. The motion is carried. Bill 9 has had first reading. Item 17, first reading of bills. Item 18, second reading of bills. Item 19, consideration in committee of the whole of bills and other matters; Bill 2, Bill 4, Bill 7, Committee Report 1-14(5), Committee Report 2-14(5) and Committee Report 3-14(5) with Mr. Delorey in the chair.

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

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): I will call the committee of the whole to order. We have several matters to deal with; Bill 2, Bill 4, Bill 7, Committee Report 1-14(5), Committee Report 2-14(5) and Committee Report 3-14(5). What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I would like to recommend that we continue consideration of Bill 2, and Committee Report 1-14(5), Committee Report 2-14(5) and Committee Report 3-14(5) concurrently to see if we can conclude the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs. Following that, perhaps consider Bill 7 and then get back into the budget and take a look at the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you. Does the committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): The Chair is calling a short break. We will come back and finish Municipal and Community Affairs. Thank you.

-- Break

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): I would like to call committee of the whole back to order. We are dealing with the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs. Would the Minister care to bring in witnesses?

HON. VINCE STEEN: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Sergeant-at-Arms, would you escort the witnesses in please? I would like to take this opportunity to welcome all the youth parliamentarians to the Assembly. Welcome.

-- Applause

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

HON. VINCE STEEN: Mr. Chairman, on my left is Dave Murray, deputy minister for MACA. On my right is Ms. Gay Kennedy, director of corporate affairs.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Steen. We will continue on where we left off yesterday, page 437, Municipal and Community Affairs, grants and contributions, Mr. Roland.

Committee Motion 10-14(5): Funding and Program Delivery for Youth Programs (Carried)

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a committee motion. Mr. Chairman,

I MOVE that this committee recommends that the Minister of Youth portfolio be amalgamated with the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs to facilitate and improve funding and program delivery for youth programs.

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

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Regarding the recreation and organization funding, it says "contribution to eligible organizations for sport and recreation." Could the Minister explain which organizations are the eligible organizations?

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

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will defer that question to Mr. Murray.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. Murray.

MR. MURRAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The amount of \$1,125,000 is to provide contributions to the regional recreation associations. There are two of those. One is the Mackenzie Regional Recreational Association. The other one is the Beaufort-Delta/Sahtu Association. That is in the amount of \$150,000. The other amount, \$825,000, is for contributions to community governments.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Murray. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Regarding the eligibility criteria, we also have territorial sporting organizations like Sport North and the Aboriginal Sporting Federation. Do they also receive funds out of this pot of money?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Murray.

MR. MURRAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. No, they do not. At the present time, both of those organizations get their funding through the lottery revenues.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Murray. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the deputy minister mentioned that there were a few sporting

organizations, but he also mentioned municipalities. Is this funding for all municipalities or just a few?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Murray.

MR. MURRAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It would be for all municipalities.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Murray. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Is the funding allocated fairly to all municipalities or is there a formula that is being used? Does every municipality receive the same amount?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Murray.

MR. MURRAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is based on the formula-based amount.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Murray. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Can the deputy minister explain what the formula is and what the base amount is?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Murray.

MR. MURRAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In terms of distributing the formula to the regions and then to the communities, we use the same allocation formula that we use for every other source of funding. It is a separate pot of money, but it is using the same formula at the present time as we use for the other community government funding.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Murray. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do not want to be asking too much, but can the Minister explain what the formula is? What is the concept of the formula? Is it based on population? Is it based on the size of the community? Is it based on the number of telephone poles?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Murray.

MR. MURRAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The formula is based on three primary factors; population, the cost of living in that community, the cost of goods and services, and then there is a base factor depending upon the level of, if you will, governance that the community is responsible for. For instance, if you are a hamlet with by-law making authority versus a settlement, your base amount will be higher because you have a higher level of responsibility for enforcing things like by-laws and those kinds of things in your community.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Murray. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a problem with that concept and the way it is allocated, based on need versus population, cost of living and what not. Community recreation organizational funding should be based on ensuring recreation, sporting events and activities, to be able to offer a similar recreation package in any community. It does not matter what size it is. Right now, the way it works in our communities, you are lucky if you have a recreation officer. You may have different recreation facilities, but if you do not have people in place, which basically you need for delivering the program, the cost of administering the program is going to be the same regardless of where it is.

By using the scenario of population, one of the problems we have in a lot of our communities is that in order to attract good recreation officers to run your programs and services, in most cases, it is going to cost you more because of the cost of delivering these programs and services in the communities. Also, moving from the communities to the regional centres for different events, a lot of times our communities are forced to have bingos and raise funds through that process.

The cost of maintaining facilities in a lot of the smaller communities is probably higher than it is to maintain facilities in larger municipalities, where you are able to offset that cost by carrying it over from another pot of money or else being able to administer more buildings and facilities in that community.

I would like to ask the Minister, how long has this allocation or portion of distribution system has been in place? Are there any plans to change it?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Murray.

MR. MURRAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This amount of money, this \$1,125,000, is part of the funding that was provided to the department through the business planning process for this year. This did not appear in previous years. The \$825,000 I was referring to that goes to the community governments has been allocated this way for the first time as being presented here in the budget.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Murray. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Can the deputy minister tell me how much money is going to the communities that I represent, Aklavik, Fort McPherson and Tsigehtchic?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Murray.

MR. MURRAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With me at the present time, I have the regional allocations. We can get the additional information. I just did not bring all of the specific communities with me, but I can get that by region: the Deh Cho is allocated \$250,000; the Inuvik region, \$349,000; North Slave region, \$186,000; Sahtu region, \$179,000; and the South Slave, \$161,000.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Murray. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Regarding the formula, you said it was based on a distribution system. That is why I would like to know exactly how much is going to be allocated. If you are talking about the Inuvik region, you are talking about the Beaufort-Delta and the Mackenzie Delta region, if the Sahtu are on their own. For the number of communities in the Beaufort-Delta and the Mackenzie Delta, it is almost three times as many communities as the Sahtu, yet they receive almost half of the amount that is going to be distributed to the Inuvik region. Was that taken into account, that you look into the number of communities based on the distribution of that money?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Murray.

MR. MURRAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Each community's amount is calculated separately and this totals up to these figures, so it is the basis of the size of the communities and the population and the cost of living factors in those communities.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Murray. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Regarding using the cost of living factor, it was based on what, Yellowknife prices compared to other regions? Or was it based on geographical areas in the Northwest Territories?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Murray.

MR. MURRAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The cost of living index that is used is based upon basically municipal service type of costs, fuel. Other factors would be wages and those kinds of things that are built in as well. I can get the full statistical analysis that is done for us, I believe by the Statistics Bureau, and is used. It is based on a standard package of municipal goods. There is a factor then that comes up. For instance, for Fort McPherson, the factor is 35 percent over the base of Yellowknife, which is 1.0.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Murray. The Chair recognizes Mr. McLeod.

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to ask the Minister if he could tell me if there are any dollars in this budget earmarked for the Arctic Winter Games.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Mr. Steen.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe there is nothing here for the Arctic Winter Games. This is next year's budget.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. McLeod.

MR. MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask if the Minister could tell me what the mandate of the Arctic Winter Games is.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Mr. Steen.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Mr. Chairman, I will ask Mr. Murray to respond to that.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. Murray.

MR. MURRAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Arctic Winter Games is an opportunity for the youth of the Northwest Territories, the other two territories, Alaska, Greenland and I believe Northern Alberta, as well as some groups from Russia, to compete in various sporting events. It is held every two years. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Murray. Mr. McLeod.

MR. MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, it is my understanding that the Arctic Winter Games are also in place to encourage maximum participation by all athletes in the North. This year, I am hearing there are some positions, especially in the cross-country skiing divisions, that are left vacant. Could you qualify or confirm that?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Mr. Murray.

MR. MURRAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am aware that there have been some concerns expressed about cross-country skiing and the number of athletes that are, if you will, trying to ski up in a higher category than the one their age

bracket would allow them to be in. My understanding was that Sport North was reviewing that and was making a decision this week on allowing them to ski in the higher category or not.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Murray. Mr. McLeod.

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is not really clear to me why all of a sudden people are not allowed to move up in the different age categories, in this case, to ski up, as they call it. It has been done all these years.

I am also concerned that this year, certain coaches, who have coached and are coaches of individuals and teams that are winning teams, are not being selected. Criteria is being placed for certain qualifications that are not part of the Arctic Winter Games policies. It is resulting in a lot of coaches coming out of Yellowknife and not the smaller communities. Could the Minister speak to that?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Mr. Murray.

MR. MURRAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In terms of how the coaches are selected, they are selected by the various sport organization groups. I do know they are not by any means all coming from Yellowknife and I do know that some of them are coming from Fort Smith. I believe Rae-Edzo has a coach going in soccer. I do not have the distribution of where they were picked, but they are not picked by the department or by Sport North. They are picked by the various sporting groups that are involved.

In terms of the other question as to skiing, I met with Sport North on Monday. They were very sensitive to the situation about athletes being able to ski up. I believe they were going to be recommending to the board that they be allowed to ski at the higher level.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Murray. Mr. McLeod, just for clarification, we are on page 437. What part of this were you actually asking your questions under? Mr. McLeod.

MR. MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, recreation organization funding.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Okay. There is question as to whether it should come under sport and recreation, which was back a bit, but go ahead, Mr. McLeod.

MR. MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask the Minister if he does get involved in any of the dispute resolution? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Mr. Steen.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Mr. Chairman, I have not been personally involved in any of the disputes. I have left the process to resolve itself, including following the appeal processes. At this point in time, it has not been necessary that this thing become political in that nature.

The issues are being resolved at the Sport North level and the other organizations. I understand there is a law firm involved as well, to give advice on the legal aspects of this. Some of the problem was with the liabilities involved in allowing these younger skiers to ski up. Those types of issues are being

handled by the appeal boards and by the sports organizations at this point in time. I have not been involved at all.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. McLeod.

MR. MCLEOD: I would like to ask the Minister what he does to promote the Arctic Winter Games, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Mr. Steen.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Mr. Chairman, most of the promotion that I am aware of is done by Sport North and the sports organizations themselves. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. McLeod.

MR. MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, it is kind of disappointing to hear the Minister does not involve himself with the Arctic Winter Games. Is he in fact attending the Arctic Winter Games themselves at all?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Mr. Steen.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Mr. Chairman, I will be attending the Arctic Winter Games.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. McLeod.

MR. MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask the Minister if he could tell us how much it is costing and who he is taking with him.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Mr. Steen.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Mr. Chairman, there were two options as to how we could attend the Arctic Winter Games, because it involved culture as well, so it also involved the Department of Education, Culture and Employment. Between my department and Education, Culture and Employment, we were reviewing the most economical way to attend the Games, cost-wise and time-wise. After all factors were taken into consideration, we decided on having an aircraft fly us directly to Iqaluit for the opening of the Games, rather than going there two or three days earlier on the sched. Since there is no sched anymore between Nuuk and Iqaluit, we were looking into chartering from Iqaluit to Nuuk, staying there two days, taking part in the cultural activities and the Games, and returning to Yellowknife from Nuuk.

It turns out that by using commercial aircraft, hotel rooms and everything, it would have been more expensive for us to go commercial than it was to use a private aircraft to Nuuk via Kangerlussuaq, because the aircraft cannot land in Nuuk and we have to take a smaller one from Kangerlussuaq to Nuuk. In the end, it is cheaper to use a private jet than it is to use commercial airlines.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. McLeod.

MR. MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, my question was who is going? Could he give me the names of the people going and what is the cost? What is the price tag?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Mr. Steen.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, that has not been finalized yet, but we are now reconsidering the route of the aircraft, which may not be directly

back to Yellowknife but may in fact be passing by Inuvik, because of meeting commitments we have there. The whole thing is still up in the air with respect to price. As well, who is going to go and who is not going to go depends in the end on the decision of the two Ministers.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Steen. We will go to Mr. Nitah.

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On page 437, I would like to continue the questioning Mr. Krutko started on recreation organization funding. Mr. Chairman, when Mr. Krutko expressed a problem that he has on the criteria used for funding communities, Mr. Murray responded by saying that this formula is new and this is the first time it has been introduced in the House in this manner. What formula was used in previous years? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Nitah. Mr. Steen.

HON. VINCE STEEN: I will have to defer that to Mr. Murray, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Mr. Murray.

MR. MURRAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As I said, this particular funding to organizations, \$1,125,000 is money that is in this budget for the first time. It is additional money that was approved through the business planning process to be included in the main estimates. It is the first time that this particular funding approach has been used to allocate the sports funding at this stage.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Murray. Mr. Nitah.

MR. NITAH: So the formula is the same, Mr. Chairman, it is just that the money is new money. Is that correct?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Nitah. Mr. Murray.

MR. MURRAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The formula used to allocate this money is the same formula process, the same formula, if you will, that is used for the community governments generally in terms of allocating their O and M funding.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Murray. Mr. Nitah.

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I too have a problem with the formula used based on population, cost of living, et cetera. I do not think that is truly reflective of the needs of the community. If you compare recreational issues, there is no difference between the size of communities. The needs are still the same. If that is not a realization that is known to the Minister already, then it should be. The needs are still the same and the formula should reflect the needs and not the population or the cost of living.

In the area of the cost of living, Mr. Chairman, I do have a problem with that. It is great that it is adjusted to the cost of living in the communities, but most of our communities do not have the resources in terms of the supplies that are needed. We all have to buy supplies and services from outside the community, which is an additional cost to the cost of living in the community already. Is the formula adjusted for that? I would first like to get an answer on the formula used to begin with, which I do not agree with. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Nitah. Mr. Steen.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Mr. Chairman, as the department indicated, this is a new program that we have come up and it is new funding. I am prepared to re-examine with the department and, if necessary, reallocate and change the allocations to reflect the wishes of the Members. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. Nitah.

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If that is the case, then the whole government has to change its ways. If we are going to change the formula used to fund community governments to deliver programs and services on behalf of the government, it should not be based on population. It should be based on need and the realities of those communities. Population base funding is something that we argue as a government to the federal government and how it is not fair.

It is the same thing we experience at the community level. It is just one step lower than the national level. At the territorial level, it is the same. This government should have a pretty good understanding of the needs of the communities when they use the same arguments that we use in the communities with the federal government. Formula based funding should be re-examined right across the board. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Nitah. Mr. Steen.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I committed to reviewing the allocation of this particular program. However, I think the Member is referring to the process of using population figures as a way of arriving at a distribution of funds, I believe, government-wide. That is something that would have to be considered on a larger scale than just my department. I cannot commit to something like that, but I can definitely commit to reviewing this particular program as to how we can better accommodate the wishes of the Members. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. Nitah.

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I guess we do have to take baby steps first, but I would like to point out to the Minister that his department is in large part responsible for the governance of communities and how they are operated through funding arrangements. I guess we could do the same thing for this entire department, not just this program. I do appreciate that he is going to look at it for this specific program. I would like to ask the Minister though, Mr. Chairman, how many recreational organizations is this budget funding in the Territories? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Nitah. Mr. Steen.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will defer that question to Mr. Murray.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. Murray.

MR. MURRAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Of the \$1,125,000, \$150,000 is being divided up between the two regional recreation associations. One is out of the Beaufort-Delta/Sahtu, and the other is the Mackenzie, which covers the North Slave, South Slave and the Deh Cho communities. The balance of the money is going to community governments and their recreation areas.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Murray. Mr. Nitah.

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, a two-part question. The first part, how much of this money is going to administration fees going to the governments, whether it is the departmental government levels, administration levels and/or community levels? I would like to know specifically how much of the \$1,125,000 is going to community governments for recreation at the community level? Another question I would like to ask, how much of this is going to the communities of Fort Resolution and Lutselk'e? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Nitah. Mr. Murray.

MR. MURRAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. None of this money is going to administration unless it is somehow going to that when the communities get it themselves, or the organizations. None of this new money is being used by the department for any of its own operating requirements. That was the first part of your question.

I do not have the figures here for the specific communities, but I can get those. This has come up from a couple of Members, so I will provide a breakdown for all the communities. I apologize, but I forget the middle part of your question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Murray. Mr. Nitah.

MR. NITAH: Thank you. The breakdown between the regional organizations and funding for communities, the percentage of the \$1,125,000 or the exact amount of the \$1,125,000 going to community governments for recreation at the community level. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Nitah. Mr. Murray.

MR. MURRAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Of the \$1,125,000, \$150,000 is going to those two regional organizations, \$75,000 each. The balance of \$825,000 is going to community governments.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Murray. Mr. Nitah.

MR. NITAH: Thank you. What exactly will the community governments be doing with this money? Does the department have a plan for this money? Do they have programs identified in the communities for this money, et cetera? I am trying to get an estimation of the Minister's understanding of sport and recreation issues in the Territories. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Nitah. Mr. Murray.

MR. MURRAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To a large extent, this money is being provided to the communities for them to set priorities with, as opposed to the government dictating how they should spend it. I know in a number of communities that money may be used to keep facilities open longer or to reduce the costs that they might have to charge people to use facilities. Other communities may use the money to offset particular programs that they want to run within that community. Some may use it to do improvements to facilities that they now have. We are not stipulating that they have to use it for one use or another. We want to make sure that the communities themselves have a very high level of involvement in setting those priorities. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Murray. We are on page 4-37. Mr. Nitah.

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask a couple of additional questions in this area. Mr. Chairman, the department is saying that this \$1,125,000 is in addition to money that is already there. These communities that are getting the funding from this budget, from this particular portion of the budget, is additional money that has been provided to communities for sport and recreation that is already there?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Nitah. Mr. Murray.

MR. MURRAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, that is correct.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Murray. Mr. Nitah.

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I understand that communities are going to be at their own free will on how to spend the money, but what guarantees or what conditions is the department putting on this particular budget so the communities do not use this budget for things other than sport and recreation activity? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Nitah. Mr. Murray.

MR. MURRAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. These are contribution programs and as such, the community has to have a plan on what they are planning on doing with that money. As a contribution, they have to account for how those funds are spent as opposed to a grant that is made to any organization. Grants are unconditional.

In terms of contributions, they have to sign a contribution agreement. That would be specific to this pot of money, so that we would be able to track what it was used for, because this was money provided over and above ongoing funding to communities. We will have to be able to come back and explain in the Legislative Assembly, at standing committees or that type of thing, how that money was used by those communities, so it is going to be tracked.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Murray. Mr. Nitah.

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, this budget, obviously it is not going to be a grant to the communities, so I am assuming that the communities are going to have to apply for percentage of the funding for this. How is the funding going to be distributed, Mr. Chairman?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Nitah. Mr. Murray.

MR. MURRAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Given the discussion I have heard, I believe we are going to be revisiting the allocation methodology before we actually start distributing the funds. I think we will be doing some of that before we decide on how much goes to each community. That was part of the question from before.

In terms of once that is decided, then we would communicate with the communities and let them know that money is there, to give us their plan for how they would like to use it within that community, and then the funds would be provided out.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Murray. Mr. Nitah.

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Can Mr. Murray explain that to me again? If they have to write? What do you mean, if they have to write? Did I hear you correctly? I am not sure. Can he repeat that? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Nitah. Mr. Murray.

MR. MURRAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Based on the discussion in here, I know there are some concerns on how it was being allocated to the communities based on a formula. We are going to be looking at that formula or that approach before we can go out to the communities and write them, basically, from our office, or our regions will write to communities and say "This money is available for recreation. If you are interested, we need a plan on how you would be spending that money over the next year."

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Murray. Mr. Nitah.

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, one of the areas of concern that has been brought to the attention of Members of the Assembly on a consistent basis is the number of contribution agreements the communities have to deal with and the amount of time and resources, both financial and human, that are spent towards justifying these contribution agreements.

In light of the knowledge the Minister and his deputy have now, would he commit to coming up with a system that is a little simpler, more responsive and friendlier to use by people in the communities, both at the departmental and community level? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Nitah. Mr. Steen.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We can commit to that, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. Nitah.

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Since we are talking about sport and recreation, I would like to follow up on a couple of questions Mr. McLeod had with regard to the Arctic Winter Games. I would like to get a breakdown. The Arctic Winter Games are supposed to be representative of the Territories, the communities of the Territories. We had a lot of discussions on this area of responsibility under the department during the last Arctic Winter Games in Whitehorse.

I would like to see if there are any improvements made in the area of regional diversity and representation. I would like to know the number of athletes that are going to the Arctic Winter Games. What sport are they dominating? From which regions of the Northwest Territories, in terms of numbers, both athletes and coaches, and people that are participating in the Arctic Winter Games, and from the community level as well. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Nitah. We may be straying away a little bit from the topic we are on here. Mr. Nitah.

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We are talking about sport and recreation. The Arctic Winter Games is a big event for athletes in the Northwest Territories, especially our young population. What we do with sport and recreation today will hopefully improve community representation. The community of

Lutselk'e, for example, only has one athlete going to the games. That is very poor. Obviously, the sport and recreation in that community has not improved in the last two years to see them have more than one athlete. In that sense, I would like to know that information. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Nitah. We will try and keep on topic here. We should really be dealing with that under sports and recreation and youth. Would the Member be requesting to go back to page 429, where we are dealing with sports and recreation? Mr. Nitah.

MR. NITAH: Can I not hedge a little bit here, Mr. Chairman?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Mr. Nitah, we are straying quite a bit off topic on page 437 here. Would you wish to return to page 429? Are you requesting to go back to 4-29? Thank you. Mr. Nitah.

MR. NITAH: Mr. Chairman, if that is what it is going to take to get an answer to my question, then I would request that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Does the committee agree that we go back to 4-29?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Mr. Steen, would you care to take that question?

HON. VINCE STEEN: Mr. Chairman, we do not have the information the Member requested. However, we will contact Sports North and get a listing of all of our athletes and what sport they are involved in and have that available for the Member. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. Nitah.

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, there is some question on dropping some of the sports in this current year of the Arctic Winter Games because of the location. Can the Minister tell me which sports were dropped from the Arctic Winter Games to accommodate the location? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Nitah. Mr. Steen.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Mr. Chairman, I am advised the biathlon and figure skating were dropped.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. Nitah.

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, it is unfortunate the biathlon was dropped from the Arctic Winter Games. There is no sport that I can think of that is truly representative of the North, both skiing and snowshoe biathlon. It is a traditional activity. Using snowshoes on hunting trips was a way of life up here and that sport reflected that way of life.

The cost of the Arctic Winter Games is going up and up. Can I ask the Minister if he would commit to seeing the elimination of some of the sports that are already predominant, like hockey may be one of them? Soccer may be another. Volleyball may be another one. The costs for these sports are high. There are other events throughout the year on an annual basis where these sports are highlighted.

If I remember correctly, TSN was in Whitehorse during the last Arctic Winter Games and the media coverage of the traditional sports was high. There was little to no coverage at all of the sports I mentioned for possible elimination. Would the Minister commit to the cost savings of some of my suggestions? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Nitah. Mr. Steen.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Mr. Chairman, the whole concept of Arctic Winter Games participation and how often we take part is part of the overall review the department is doing with our partners in sports territorial wide, including participation in the Arctic Winter Games.

Based on the information we are getting back, and also probably after the meeting in April in Inuvik, the department will decide whether or not we are going to continue to take part in the Arctic Winter Games biannually or whether we will do it on a four-year basis or what we are going to do here.

Many of the concerns the Member expressed were and are being considered now and are being voiced by sports organizations. I can mention that biathlon and figure skating are both taking part. We have given funding to the territorial organizations to take part in these events that are being held in Whitehorse as a second option rather than taking part in the Arctic Winter Games. Because they have been set back, we are funding them to go to Whitehorse instead.

However, that is not the same as taking part in the Arctic Winter Games. We realize that, but the whole issue of how often we take part, the cost involved, how much actual benefits the territorial sport athletes are obtaining by taking part in the Arctic Winter Games is all part of the question that I am hoping we are going to be able to settle by having this meeting in Inuvik in April. We will make a decision based on that.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Steen. Are we concluded page 4-29 before we return to page 4-37?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 4-37. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, regarding the fire training funds, I see it has gone down by \$15,000. I think one of the things we have been pushing for the last number of years is the importance of the volunteer firefighters, ensuring we have adequate training, the resources and tools for our volunteer firemen in our communities to do their job.

I for one do not appreciate seeing a decline in this area. It may be minor, but it is still a decline. I think it is important as a government that we ensure community fire protection and the volunteer firefighters have the tools, the equipment and the training to do the job.

I would like to ask the Minister, are there going to be any improvements or increases in this amount in the future? Why was there a decline in that amount?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Steen.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, right now, the fire training is done under the fire

marshal's office. We are working the program assuming the fire marshal is satisfied with the training that is taking part in the communities. If there is a need and the fire marshal identifies a need for more training funding, that would be reflected in next year's business plan, because fire fighting and fire fighting training is a high priority with this government. We would address it in that manner. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was hoping this government would be the one that would dictate the budget we need. We all know we need the training for our firefighters and that our expectation for the firefighters to have people who can do the job and have the training and also have the tools and equipment to do it is important.

The one thing we see, especially communities that are on the highway systems, we feel they are the ones that have to respond to emergencies on our highways. They are also the ones that have to deal with different types of circumstances, such as accidents and not only fighting fires. I think it is important that we have people trained in different areas of first aid; CPR, different courses regarding H2S, different types of dangerous chemicals and gases that are going past our communities, so they can react to an emergency or an incident on the highway system. You have these people equipped with the training so when they respond to a fire, they know what type of fire they are going to have to react to. Through the training, they have the assurance that they have the best training around and they will be able to do the job to the best of their ability.

I would like to ask the Minister, are we looking at expanding the training that is presently being given to ensure that we cover those other areas, knowing that there is all this activity around us, especially in regard to the different chemicals and contaminants that are flowing through our communities and up and down our highway systems? Also, regarding the different types of materials that are now being used in our communities, what exactly has been done to expand the training that is presently being provided so they can acquire more certification and training in different areas?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Steen.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Mr. Chairman, in the past fiscal year, we did increase the expenditures for firefighter training by \$15,000 from within the department. It went from \$90,000 to \$105,000. We are prepared to increase the expenditure for firefighter training, in particular in reference to what I said yesterday, while we were planning to bring in a program to allow communities to have equipment to respond to emergencies on the highway.

I believe the Member's community is one of the ones that is going to be equipped, if it is not already equipped, with a pick-up truck that has an attachment in the back that is capable of responding to emergencies on the highway.

Therefore, we know that in order to take proper advantage of this equipment, we have to have training. That is what we are prepared to do. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I think just touching on the area of equipment, as a government, we have to ensure that our firefighters are operating with the equipment, especially with our fire trucks.

I have received some information from the department that there are quite a few communities that have fire trucks that are almost 20 years old. I think nowadays, with people getting certified with class one and what not, mostly the transmission systems are all air systems. Basically, you are talking an 18-speed or 15-speed. These things are cadillacs and the model, a lot of them have a double shift. You have to have certain skills to operate this piece of equipment because back then, it was a you-find-them-and-grind-them sort of way to drive these vehicles. These vehicles are now coming to a point where they are having some major problems with breakdowns.

To ensure the safety of the firefighters, we have to replace these vehicles, hopefully sooner rather than later. I would like to ask the Minister, what are you doing to ensure that the fire equipment, such as fire trucks, is being replaced so our volunteer firemen can have the equipment to fight fires without having to worry about that equipment breaking down on them?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Steen.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Mr. Chairman, the department is going to be doing a review of all the fire trucks within the communities. In particular, those 15 years and older. However, I think it is a well-understood fact that fire trucks are not the type of vehicle that is going to generate many miles. The fact that these things are 15 to 20 years old is based on the life of the vehicle, depending on the number of hours in the vehicle and the number of hours on a motor.

If you take into consideration the fact that it takes 20 years for these motors to generate the same number of hours that a large truck on the highway would generate, that is what is used to arrive at a time line for replacement.

I understand where the Member is coming from. I understand his concern. We certainly will be looking at all of these vehicles to ensure they are serviceable and they can respond to an emergency as required. We also have a plan in place where after they would reach a certain life, we replace them. That is what we are using as a guideline right now.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I have written several letters to the Minister. I have received letters from the Hamlet of Fort McPherson. There was a proposal put forth by the volunteer firefighters of Fort McPherson to have the fire truck in Fort McPherson replaced. The vehicle was purchased in 1983. Next year, it is going to be 20 years old. They have requested to the Minister that moving this vehicle up is a priority for them, not only for the safety of the community but also for the safety of the volunteer firemen. What are you doing on this matter to ensure that this vehicle is moved up, so it will be replaced after 20 years, which is next year?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Steen.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Mr. Chairman, there are three communities that will be receiving new fire trucks next year. They are Rae-Edzo, Lutselk'e and Fort McPherson. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Could the Minister restate that? Did I hear Fort McPherson?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Steen.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That is correct, but I will also clarify that it is for the year 2003-2004. That is next year.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Steen. We will go to Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is good to hear that we are getting new trucks. On the truck question, I would like to ask if the Minister will keep those trucks in the communities, so they can use them for back-up fire trucks or for using in municipalities for dust control.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Mr. Steen.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe the vehicle is the property of the community.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Going back to fire training, I hear the concerns all over. I know for a fact that there needs to be a lot of training in some of the communities. I used to be a firefighter, a volunteer firefighter. You said the fire marshal has given some notice saying that the training is there already. Is there anything on paper that you can share with us that says our people are trained? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Mr. Steen.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Mr. Chairman, if I could defer that question to Mr. Murray?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. Murray.

MR. MURRAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The department in the regional offices is working with the fire department in Rae-Edzo now to do an assessment on the training that is required for community firefighters, the state of the equipment, basically checking out the system in Rae. They will be doing all the communities in the North Slave. That will be expanded across all of our communities over the next year.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Murray. Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you. After the survey and the next study, if there is a need, will the Minister be putting more money into this training program?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Mr. Murray.

MR. MURRAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. One of the reasons we are doing the assessment is to define what the needs are. Once those needs are defined, we will be able to build them over a number of years into our business planning process.

Some may be equipment, some may be training, maintenance. There could be a number of things that need to be addressed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Murray. Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just wanted to make sure that it was for expanding the service and not to justify any cuts that they might be looking for in the future. That is all I have for this page. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Mr. Nitah.

MR. NITAH: I am sorry, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I just got some news that was kind of interesting, but I do want to ask a question on page 4-37, the regional leadership budget for \$187,000 to fund eligible organizations for regional leadership. I would like to know from the Minister what program this is, and if it is in effect, where is in it effect, et cetera? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Nitah. Mr. Murray.

MR. MURRAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That funding is provided for various regional meetings. For instance, when the Beaufort-Delta leadership meets, we give a contribution to that. However, it is also available for meetings in the South Slave and any of the other regions as well.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Murray. Page 4-37, total other grants and contributions, \$2,852,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Total grants and contributions, \$2,852,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Total other grants and contributions, \$2,901,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Total grants and contributions, \$46,578,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 4-39, school of community government, operations expense, total operations expense, \$2,246,000. Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you. Going back to my colleague's question, under the school of community government, we have political development, leadership and governance. Is that only for municipal governments or is that also for aboriginal governments and whatever sort of governments are out there?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Mr. Murray.

MR. MURRAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Many of the programs, in fact, all of the programs at the school of community government are open to band members or leaders to attend. In fact, we get funding from Indian Affairs and other federal departments that is partnered with this money, so we

can expand the participation and have more money and more courses held, so yes, to your question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Murray. Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you. Also on the same page, community land management. Can you give us a brief explanation of what that is all about?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Mr. Murray.

MR. MURRAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That is a program that is cost shared between ourselves as well as the federal government, which provides training to either community government employees and in some cases, people who will be involved in that sort of lands process through the self-government process. It is for training on how to administer leases, land leases, how the land title system works, basically, how land management administration is done in the Territories.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Murray. Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just under the search and rescue, can you give us a brief report on what kind of searches? I understand that most of the searches are led by the RCMP or by the EMO. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Mr. Murray.

MR. MURRAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The search and rescue and the emergency services, the item above it, are both done with the school of community government participating with the emergency measures office. The school provides for setting up the curriculum and the training, and then delivering, making sure proper people are brought in to do the instructing.

What we are talking about here in search and rescue is instructing people in the communities on how, if they are going out on the land, to participate in a search that may have been called by the RCMP. It is basically giving them some techniques and things like that and how to organize those kinds of searches as well.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Murray. Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you. Under recreational facilities, operations, the other day, I had a Return to Oral Question saying they did not fund any O and M for new facilities. I am just wondering, why are we giving them this training if we are not giving any money for O and M and new facilities?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Mr. Murray.

MR. MURRAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Recreation Facility Operators Program had been a program of MACA that was dropped back in the 90's and for a number of years had not been offered. That program is designed for those people who today are operating those facilities to upgrade their skills on how to not just operate the facility, but things like making ice and doing the various things that they have to do. This is training money, not the actual funding for operating a facility.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Murray. Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: ...(inaudible)...public safety, I understand we also have workplace safety and all of this. I am just wondering, this public safety, what does that involve?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Mr. Murray.

MR. MURRAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That is a program that we are involved in partnership with the Department of Justice and the RCMP, looking at by-law officer training, as well as the Community Constable Program.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Murray. Page 4-39, school of community government, operations expense, total operations expense, \$2,246,000. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 4-41, school of community government, grants and contributions, contributions, \$25,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Total grants and contributions, \$25,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 442, information item, active positions.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 4-43, detail of work performed on behalf of others.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 4-44, total department, \$3,335,000. Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Canada/NWT Infrastructure Agreement, I see this is for municipal infrastructure projects. Looking at the capital projects in Rae, they recommended they get a new source of water and the cost is going to be a little more than what this government had anticipated. Would the Minister get some funding with the federal government to go and fund some projects that are going to be a little bit of a higher cost than what was originally thought of?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Mr. Murray.

MR. MURRAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That \$2,860,000 represents the share of the \$4-odd million that we received from the federal government that has been set aside for the non-tax-based communities.

What is going to happen there is Public Works is in the process of conducting various studies and reviews of community water systems. This funding of \$2,860,000 is also going to be tied into the funding that we have already set aside. We have \$2 million in our capital for projects that have been identified as being needed by Public Works through this review process. It

may very well be available. Depending on what the priorities are of the reviews and the studies that are now underway, it may be available for projects that are already on the books. It depends on what those priorities are from a technical point of view being set by Public Works. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Murray. Page 4-43, detail of work performed on behalf of others, total department, \$3,335,000. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On the same matter, the Canada/NWT Infrastructure Agreement, I hope the Minister is going to take a study, and it takes forever to solve some of these problems.

One of the communities I represent, Tsiigehtchic, there has been a notification given to this government regarding the condition of that water source. There have been warnings written to this government. I see in the budget that there was supposed to be improvement to the filtering system and what not.

My concern is when you talk studies, I hope we are not spending hundreds of thousands of dollars to study something we already know exists. There are problems out there. I hope the Minister realizes that we have some major problems in our communities where we have been detecting different traces of carcinogens; THMs and different types of items that are in the water. From what is happening with regard to Aklavik and Fort McPherson, now Tsiigehtchic, that we do not exclude communities because of the size of those communities.

I would like to ask the Minister, where is this money going? Is there any money allocated to go to the community of Tsiigehtchic because of the water concerns there?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Steen.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Mr. Chairman, most of the studies the department was referring to have already been done. It is a matter of deciding where to allocate the funding now to the highest priorities. Different communities are facing different levels of problem with their facilities.

In the case of Tsiigehtchic, for this year, we have \$100,000 for a truck fill station and \$1 million in 2003-2004 to upgrade the water treatment facility there. So there is not going to be very much money actually spent on any more studies. We are actually putting the money towards the projects now. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Out of the \$2,860,000, I believe the federal contribution is \$3.4 million, so is this our half that is in the budget here or is that a combined amount from the feds and ourselves?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Steen.

HON. VINCE STEEN: The figure in the budget here of \$2,860,000 is federal money.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I received a letter from Lorne Tricoteux, the assistant regional

director in regard to the program. The letter states the program is a partnership between the federal government and the Government of the Northwest Territories to target green infrastructure projects that can be cost-shared by either levels of government. Cost-shared, does that mean a 50/50 commitment? That is the federal government's \$2.8 million. Are we going to be putting \$2.8 million into this as our share?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Steen.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Mr. Chairman, the territorial government funds non-tax-based communities on a 50/50 basis with the feds. On the tax-based communities, it is 50/50 with the feds and that is met by the tax-based communities. That is the process we are using. The actual breakdown of the figures I will ask Mr. Murray to respond to, because he sits on the committee with the federal government to allocate this funding. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. Murray.

MR. MURRAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The \$2.86 million, I believe that is the federal share for both non-tax-based and tax-based that is planned for the 2002-2003 fiscal year. Under the program, \$1.86 million of this amount is the federal share of the tax-based communities. A million dollars of it is the share that will go to the non-tax-based. I should add that on top of this \$2.86 million, there is another \$1.4 million, or something like that, that will show up in next year's budget for non-tax-based out of that federal cost-shared program. It is just that as of right now, being able to spend it all in the one year is unlikely.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Murray. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: If I understand the deputy minister, next year's budget, there is \$1 million allocated for Tsiigehtchic. Is that the \$1 million that is going to be allocated to the non-tax-based communities?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Murray.

MR. MURRAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. No, it has nothing to do with the Tsiigehtchic project. That Tsiigehtchic project that shows up in the capital acquisition plan is 100 percent GNWT dollars.

This figure of federal funding goes to projects that have not been allocated out yet, as we were saying and what the Minister was referring to, will be completing when the studies are done and when the priorities are being set, the federal money and the GNWT money will be used to allocate to the non-tax-based communities based on priorities for upgrading existing systems. That \$1 million for Tsiigehtchic is there regardless of that.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Murray. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Is this in light of what happened in Walkerton? This money was not in the budget previous, so I am wondering, is that why the federal government, along with ourselves, is putting more money and dollars into improving the water and waste systems, and also improving the water management in the solid waste management project? Is that one of the fundamental reasons behind this new project?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Murray.

MR. MURRAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think this government has always put quite a bit of capital into water and sewer. Certainly it is a high priority in the government's corporate capital planning system. None of the projects that we had submitted for water...because it is related to health and safety, all of those were approved. I think across Canada, all of the provinces are taking a higher interest in their water. We are doing our own checking, along with Health and Social Services and with Public Works and Services, on water quality.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Murray. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. One of the major concerns that we have heard come out of Walkerton is the area of training and ensuring that we have a system in place that we can continuously test our water systems. That it is an ongoing process. That it just does not come on an as-and-when-needed basis. Will we be looking at the whole area of water management in regard to solid waste management, ensuring we have a system in place that is accountable to where we are going? I would like to ask the Minister, is there such a management project in place? Do we have plans and strategic initiatives to look at the comprehensive review of water and solid waste and how it is managed in the Northwest Territories?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Steen.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, Public Works and Services, Municipal and Community Affairs, and Health and Social Services have put together a committee to review all of the water and sewage problems we were experiencing in the communities. Taking those into consideration, we are putting together a plan where we can address the problems on a priority basis. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Steen. Page 443, detail of work performed on behalf of others, total department, \$3,335,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 4-45, revenues, recoveries and transfer payments.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): We will go back to page 4-7, department summary, Municipal and Community Affairs, operations expense, total operations expense, \$70,750,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): We will go to cap-5, Municipal and Community Affairs, capital acquisition plan, community financial services, total community financial services, \$2,000,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Regional operations, total regional operations, \$4,718,000. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, we have had a lot of concerns and debate in regard to how communities are being served, especially when you look at the community infrastructure. One of the main means of transportation and movement of goods and services, and also the concern of public safety, was the area of roads and

infrastructure in our communities. I think that as a government, we have to do something to ensure we improve the infrastructure in our communities by way of a project or what not.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to move a motion.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Do you have a motion, Mr. Krutko?

Committee Motion 11-14(5): To Pave Main Streets of Non-Tax-Based Municipalities (Carried)

MR. KRUTKO: Mr. Chairman,

I MOVE that this committee recommends that the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs develop, in cooperation with the Minister of Transportation, a program to pave the main streets within non-tax-based municipalities with a population greater than 500 residents located on the Northwest Territories highway systems.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): We have a motion on the floor. The motion is in order. To the motion. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The question I would have in this area of non-tax-based municipalities with a population greater than 500 residents located on Northwest Territories highway systems, municipalities such as Inuvik, where there are paved roads funded mainly by taxpayers, I am wondering what the process would be in something like this. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Roland. To the motion. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Just in response to the Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, this project, in my eyes, is doable. I think we have two departments who have the expertise in-house to deal with it. I think the communities are not saying they will not contribute. I think the communities can contribute by way of gravel or support from the community, either through hamlet equipment or labour or what not.

This is a project that, as far as I can see, is long overdue. I am talking about communities that are on our present highway systems. I do not think there are too many of those communities who have a population over 500. I think we are talking about communities like Fort Resolution, maybe Fort Providence, Fort McPherson, Rae-Edzo.

For us doing this, I think it sets an example to the Northwest Territories and to our tourists who come into our communities that we do have something to offer. If someone is on their way to Inuvik, that we have decent streets and they do not go back south and say "Do not drive up the Dempster Highway because there is nothing but mud and potholes and you will be eating dust all the time."

I think that we have to improve our communities in some manner. I think this project is doable in the context that we have the Department of Transportation that presently has the people in place to deal with paving and maintaining highways and roads. They do have equipment. We have the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs who have a responsibility and they have experience within the larger centres.

In my view, we have tried a compromise in this resolution by allowing the other communities to realize we are not talking every community in the Northwest Territories. We are talking about the larger communities in the context of a population over 500 and also, you have to be connected to the highway system in the Northwest Territories. So because of that, I think this is doable.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. To the motion. Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, I would like to elaborate on what Mr. Krutko was saying. Even communities like Lutselk'e can get equipment in during the summer on a barge, a paver to get the dust under control. Also, after talking with the Department of Transportation, I am told that they will no longer be using calcium for dust control because it is a hazardous material and it cannot be used anymore. So we will have no alternative but to pave all the roads in all the communities.

Just a good example of what a tax-based community gets and what the small communities do not get, if you look at Yellowknife alone, you have 10 kilometres of six-inch asphalt that is funded totally by the Department of Transportation. You do not have that in the smaller communities. In Hay River, you have three or four kilometres of road that are six-inch asphalt. You also have that in Inuvik. Fort Simpson just recently got theirs. The funding formula is not used when they fund asphalt or dust control, but they do give it and other perks.

In order to be fair, if we were to take that asphalt and set it out to a three-quarter inch layer, we could pave all the small communities to the quality here, but because of the environmental hazard that calcium chloride is doing, I think it is only fair that they pave all the streets. Just give us a little chip seal. We will maintain it.

If MACA wants Transportation to do it, like they do it for Yellowknife and the larger communities, maybe that is what MACA has to do. They have to go to them, because they already are...it is freebies for these large communities. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. To the motion. Mr. Nitah.

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I am speaking in favour of this motion. Mr. Chairman, what this motion speaks to is that Municipal and Community Affairs and the Department of Transportation develop a partnership to start a program, Mr. Chairman, to start a program to look at paving streets on the highway system. This is not stating they have to do it. This is a program to see the viability of it.

Mr. Chairman, you know, as a government we provide programs and services. Unfortunately, most of these programs and services are not something that everybody in the community benefits from. The road infrastructure, the paving of the streets and sidewalks is something that the whole community can benefit from. It does not matter the age or level of activity of individuals. They can benefit from this.

This is a very good motion. I think it speaks to this government's commitment to the communities, to the viability of those communities. I think it will go a long way, optically, for

those communities. Spiritually, physically and mentally it will be beneficial to the people of those communities. Tourism would benefit in those communities from just this kind of activity, Mr. Chairman.

I encourage my colleagues in the House to support this motion to develop a program to look at paving the streets, the main streets to begin with, Mr. Chairman, in our communities in the Northwest Territories. Let us show the people out there that we do care about them, that we do value them as communities and as partners. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just feel I have to correct my colleague for North Slave. There is no pavement or maintenance done by Transportation down the main road of Inuvik. In fact, the by-pass road is still gravel. Airport road, mind you, is paved and maintained by Transportation, but that is not the main street down the community. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Roland. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

-- Applause

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): We are on cap-7, regional operations, total regional operations, \$4,718,000. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: I am looking at the Deep Water Lake Project, Fort McPherson, for this year. You have \$125,000, but knowing there have been some major difficulties getting this project off the ground, there have been some mechanical problems with regard to the vehicles. Also, the question of infrastructure, ensuring we have garaging and a place to store these vehicles, instead of having them parked outside when it is 40 below and seeing these vehicles freeze up.

I would like to ask the Minister exactly, is that amount realistic, considering all the situations that we are now being faced with? There are unforeseen situations that we now finally realize that because of the project being brought online in the middle of winter, now there is going to be an increased cost associated with garaging and maintenance of the vehicles. Also, there has to be some improvements regarding the wear and tear on those vehicles. Is that amount in this \$125,000?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Steen.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I will defer that to Mr. Murray.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. Murray.

MR. MURRAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. At the present time, that \$125,000 is for known deficiencies. Much of the work on the vehicles the Member was mentioning has been done or is being worked on now. As well, we do not know what carryover, if any, may be left over, since they are still doing some work and using up some of the money on those repairs now. We may also be carrying over funding from the current year's \$3.6 million budget.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Murray. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The deputy minister mentioned that there have been carryovers. Is that carryover coming from the original estimate of the \$3,363,000? Is that the carryover or is that over and above the \$125,000?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Murray.

MR. MURRAY: The \$125,000 is set aside as money for next year, irrespective of the carryover. If it is carryover funding in the current year that is not spent, then it would be on top of that.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Murray. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Regarding the vehicles, there was a supplementary appropriation that was requested by this government in the range of \$200,000 for the cost overruns of the vehicles when they were being delivered and constructed. Now, we are in a position of having to delete or take off a lot of bells and whistles, or extra shut-off valves and air hoses and what not, that seem to compromise those vehicles in cold weather.

I would like to ask the deputy minister, exactly what type of insurance or protection does this government have when we have a company providing vehicles and there is a cost overrun? Then, once it is delivered, we find out we have a whole bunch of problems with it. What type of protection do we have? Do we have insurance? Do we have a guarantee? Is it a lifetime guarantee? What type of guarantee do we have that we are not paying for something over and above the original price, where we are having to come forth to this House for supplementary appropriation, and then later finding that there are some major problems with that piece of equipment?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Steen.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Mr. Chairman, we are drifting into something that Public Works is responsible for.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Since the Minister wears both hats, could he not answer the question?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Mr. Krutko, we are here with Municipal and Community Affairs, so we will stick to that department. Thank you. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe the supplementary appropriation was requested by the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs. That is why I asked the question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Did you want to comment on that, Mr. Steen?

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the vehicles are under warranty. Certain things on that vehicle are covered by warranty. Some of the problems they have been experiencing are not warranty related. They are operational related. We have had to make modifications. Public Works has had to pay for modifications on these vehicles. Also, it has required some training on the part of the operators to prevent further problems with their vehicles. Part of the operation problems were related to the fact that there was no storage for the vehicles. We are resolving that by

putting in place a parking garage now to accommodate the vehicle. We are working on the second garage. Those two garages, I believe, were also related to part of the funding for supplementary. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: I am not too sure which supplementary the Minister is talking about. I am talking about the supplementary that came forward I believe in December, just before the last sitting, where there was that \$200,000 and some dollars. From what you are talking about now, it is probably in this supplementary. Are there more supplementaries coming down that we are not aware of?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Steen.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, we would not be talking about a supplementary and a carryover at the same time. There are no more supplementaries coming forward.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the Minister clearly stated that there have been some mistakes and what not that did take place. I would like to ask the Minister, could I get a breakdown of some of those areas? I know I have asked for it earlier in the House. I have not received it to date, so I would like to know what is the actual cost associated with this to date and the cost that has occurred because of these placements and improvement to the project and the vehicles?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Steen.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I committed to do that, but tied to that commitment was the fact that we are still going through the process of taking those bugs out of those vehicles. We expect that is not going to be resolved until we are sure we have parking space for both, so we know they are not related to freezing. In other words, it is a process of elimination right now. I am hoping that by the time the warm weather comes in, we will be able to come together with a final price of what it is all costing. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Earlier, in our sitting here, I talked about Wha Ti when their community hall burned down. I do not see it in our plans here, even for future years. I would just like to know why it is not in here?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Mr. Steen.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Mr. Chairman, I do know the Wha Ti community hall was in the plan for this year, but it is in a separate place in the book, I believe page 436. It is related to the fact that we approved, we moved up some projects under that new capital initiative. Wha Ti community hall was one of them. However, it has become more of an issue now because the old one burned down. Talking with Public Works, I cannot come to give the Member a commitment that this thing will actually be moved up to this year, where the construction takes place this year because we cannot guarantee the materials will be able to make the winter road. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I see some numbers for the water treatment plant in Rae-Edzo. It says Rae-Edzo. I am not sure. Is that just Rae or is it the Edzo part? We have two communities, so it is hard to make heads or tails.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Mr. Steen.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Mr. Chairman, I will ask Mr. Murray to respond.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. Murray.

MR. MURRAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That is the water treatment plant in Rae.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Murray. Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I see the numbers are set there, but as we all know, they are doing testing to see from which source they will be getting their water. That might change the design of the building. Also, attending the last hamlet meeting, they found out the reservoir they have in Rae now is not sufficient enough. It does not have the capacity for a fire. If there was a large fire, they would not have enough water. I would just like to know, will these numbers be changing when the design comes in this year?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Mr. Steen.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Mr. Chairman, I am getting double messages over there.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Could we have order in the House please? There is too much noise. Mr. Lafferty, could you repeat your question please?

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I see numbers here that are set already, but as we know, Rae-Edzo has asked for a new source of water. There are tests being done to see which source will be better, or which one will be less costly to treat, which will be better drinking water. Also, attending the last hamlet meeting, I found out that if they were to have a fire, they would not have the capacity, the water capacity that was needed. In their notes, they have put down that they are going to ask for another reservoir along with the water plan. Would that be possible?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Mr. Murray.

MR. MURRAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I know that with the problems they have been working on, and with the Rae water system, there may be other bugs, other problems identified. If the studies being conducted by Public Works and the work Public Works is doing today identifies additional needs, then we will have to see how that can be accommodated in the plan over the next few years.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Murray. Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So we will give the people of Rae-Edzo what they want and not what the standard criteria or the funding allows?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Mr. Murray.

MR. MURRAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think what we are saying is we will provide what is needed in consultation with the community. Whether it is everything they are asking for or not is a different situation.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Murray. Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you. Was that yes, Rae will get what they want, regardless of price?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Mr. Steen.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Mr. Chairman, I believe the department is stating we are going to review with Public Works what is necessary for the community to be able to address their water needs. We will discuss this with the community. Obviously, we are going to have to come to some kind of agreement with the community as to what we can supply them with. That is what will be reflected in the capital plans. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Steen. We are on capital, page 7, total regional operations, \$4,718,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I see several areas where you are looking at arenas, outdoor rinks. You have Kakisa, Trout Lake, Wrigley, and the community of Tsiigehtchic is also listed to receive one next year. One of the concerns of the community is, have they looked at the possibility of the cost of having these things covered by way of canvas or by way of some sort of industrial cover that could be put on it? If the cost is not that great, have we looked at the feasibility of considering adding that into the construction of an outdoor rink, so at least you have a covering over it? I would like to ask the Minister or the deputy minister, have you looked at the feasibility of that as an option for these outdoor rinks? We may not be able to get full arenas, but at least we will be able to put a covering on these rinks, so they are at least out of the snow and what not. They are covered. Has the department looked at that and is it a possibility? Is it something the department could look at and see if it is feasible?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Steen.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, we have not looked at it. It has not been identified as a need by the communities that the Member mentions. However, we could have our municipal engineers look into what is available and make the communities aware of it. We could do it in that manner. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I believe this was an issue in the Yukon. I believe the Yukon Government was able to resolve it, regarding communities such as Mayo and other smaller communities, who received outdoor rinks. They were able to come up with a project to shelter these outdoor rinks by putting a covering on top of them. I would just like to ask the Minister if he could have his

department look at how they were able to accomplish it in the Yukon.

For the Minister's sake, I have formally written a letter to your predecessor on this matter because the community of Tsiigehtchic did request that they if they do get a rink, that it has some sort of shelter on it. I would just like to remind the Minister of that.

I would like to ask the Minister if he would consider looking at other areas in Canada or other territories, what they are doing to look at outdoor rinks and the feasibility of putting shelters or covers over top of them.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Steen.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Mr. Chairman, this is what I meant by having the municipal engineer review what is available, including what is available and what is being used in other jurisdictions, and then bringing that forward as an option that the community may want to consider. I can pass that information on to the Member. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If the Minister really wants to get motivated, look at the Fort McPherson Canvas Shop, where we have a lot of canvas. We might be able to help you out in that area as well. We make tents, tee-pees, even covers for outdoor skating rinks.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Steen.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We will look at all options.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Steen. We are on capital, page 7, total regional operations, \$4,718,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Total department, \$6,718,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Does the committee agree consideration of Municipal and Community Affairs is concluded?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): I would like to thank the Minister and his witnesses for appearing. As we previously agreed, we will proceed to review Bill 7, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly Retiring Allowances Act and the Supplementary Retiring Allowances Act. I would like to call on the Minister responsible for bringing this bill forward for any opening remarks. Mr. Steen.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, my opening remarks on Bill 7.

As a Member of the Board of Management representing the Executive Council, I have been assigned the responsibility to introduce Bill 7, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly Retiring Allowances Act and the Supplementary Retiring Allowances Act.

As Members are aware, Mr. Chairman, this bill is best described as an all Members bill and is not a government-sponsored bill, so each Member is free to vote as they see fit on this matter. This bill was developed upon the adoption of a motion of the Legislative Assembly on November 6th last year. The motion, Mr. Chairman, asked that a bill be developed that would offer Members of the 14th Assembly participation in a supplementary pension plan, with the following criteria:

1. Members have to contribute;
2. Members have to apply to join, and participation in the plan is not compulsory;
3. Members pension would be calculated at two percent; and
4. Eligibility for a pension would be four years or one full term of a Legislative Assembly.

The bill before us today will allow Members of the Legislative Assembly to participate in a supplementary retiring allowance plan. Those Members who participate in the supplementary plan will be required to increase their contributions to the registered plan by 2.5 percent for a total contribution of 9 percent.

To participate in the supplementary plan, current Members will be given a one-time offer to elect to join the new plan. If a Member chooses to join, the appropriate form will have to be filed with the Speaker.

The normal retirement age for the supplementary plan will be 60 years. Members who participate in the supplementary plan would be eligible for a retirement pension of 2 percent of their average earnings, over his or her best four years as an MLA, multiplied by years of credited service. Pensions are payable for the life of the Member. If a Member dies and has a surviving spouse, 66 and 2/3 percent of the pension will continue to their spouse.

In addition, if the deceased Member is survived by dependent children, each child will receive a 10 percent pension. Where there is no surviving spouse, each child will receive 25 percent pension for as long as the child remains a dependent.

Mr. Chairman, the bill provides for current Members who were Members of the 13th Legislative Assembly to be given the option of having their 13th Legislative Assembly service covered, provided they pay the full cost of including that service under this plan.

The bill also changes numerous provisions of the Legislative Assembly Retiring Allowances Act and the Supplementary Retiring Allowances Act to ensure that the two plans are alike and consistent with similar plans wherever possible. Finally, this bill makes other changes to clarify the details of the registered and supplementary plans.

Mr. Chairman, pension legislation and its various requirements for compliance with federal legislation are very complex. However, I have been advised that all of the provisions of our Retiring Allowances Act comply with the Income Tax Act and the requirements of the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency.

Mr. Chairman, I would be pleased, with the assistance of my officials, to assist with the consideration of this bill. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Seeing as there was no review by standing committee of this bill, I will see if the Minister would like to bring in any witnesses. Mr. Minister.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Yes, Mr. Chairman, I would.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Steen. Does the committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Would the Sergeant-at-Arms escort the witnesses in please? Mr. Minister, for the record, would you please introduce your witnesses?

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, on my right is Ms. Diane Buckland, legislative counsel, Department of Justice. On my left is Mr. David Hamilton, Clerk of the Legislative Assembly.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Steen. We will go to general comments. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On Bill 7, as a result of yesterday, I decided to do a little bit of history, I guess, on the supplementary appropriation, especially with some of the comments made in the House by Members of the Assembly. I wanted to find out when this came in, and again, sparked by some of the comments. I refer to unedited Hansard, page 945. The Premier was speaking to this and stated, and I quote:

Since it was bestowed upon us by previous Assemblies, it was difficult, as Mr. Antoine has indicated, to stand there and talk about what we thought we deserved or did not deserve.

I checked on the definition of bestowed, and my understanding is it was something that was given as a gift, in a sense, or in that nature. When I was looking at the history of the Supplementary Retiring Allowances Act, I found out that in fact, in 1989, this bill was brought forward as Bill 28-89(2), and found out that it was the 11th Assembly that brought this in. We still have one current existing Member who was actually part of the crew that helped bestow this upon Members of that time. I must for the record state Mr. Premier was part of the crew. It is interesting. This thing does have some history.

As well, Mr. Chairman, looking at this situation and looking at what happened there, trying to find out if there was debate or what was brought in this area. Second reading of Bill 28-89(2), Supplementary Retiring Allowances Act, there was no discussion to the principle of the bill and everybody, I guess as I see it: "All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.", according to Hansard, November 1, 1989, page 486.

I found out some further history on this subject. On November 2, 1989, page 593 of Hansard, third reading of Bill 28-89(2), Supplementary Retiring Allowances Act, it was the Honourable Tom Butters:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Sahtu, that Bill 28-89(2),

Supplementary Retiring Allowances Act, be read for the third time.

Then it was carried, Mr. Speaker. That was the establishment of the Supplementary Retiring Allowances Act.

We heard much debate yesterday in this House about re-establishing the Supplementary Retiring Allowances Act, and I just gave a brief comment that I would not be supporting it as my stance in the 13th Assembly is still the same today.

After some discussion with Members, and Members making comments that I should in fact double-check with my wife to make sure I was making the right decision, I did so. I have talked to my wife and also to other members of my constituency. I know this is not looked upon very kindly by members of the public and it would always be difficult, I agree with Members, that bringing something in of this nature would get any favour from a lot of people out there, no matter what the conditions.

My stance is still the same. This is not appropriate to bring in a Supplementary Retiring Allowances Act. There are times when I look at it and say yes, I have done as much work as previous Members of this Legislative Assembly, and based on that, maybe I should qualify for it. However, at the same time, my stance remains the same and in principle, I cannot support this bill. I would hope that Members would see that, but knowing as well from the events of yesterday, it looks like this is going to proceed.

It was interesting to hear the debate. I agree, Members had said they were interested in hearing this debate. I believe this is the first time in the history of the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories that a bill of this nature has received so much debate. With that, thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Roland. General comments. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am not going to be long. I just wanted to add something that I did not have a chance to state yesterday. I was one of the first people to speak and you do not get a chance to speak twice. I just wanted to state for the record that I maintain the position that while there was some contribution by Members of the last Assembly and there will be for this Assembly, I do believe still that the majority of the funding is public money.

Second, while there is a surplus, that is not going to last forever. There will come a time when there will be a need for the government to contribute to this fund as long as it lasts. I do not assume that once passed, I do not think another Assembly will come in and try to discontinue it in the next ten years.

Third, I have heard that the surplus is there because of good investment and that most of the money gained is a result of investment. That is true, but I still maintain that if you make \$100 out of one dollar in government money, that \$101 still is government money.

I heard someone say that we do not want to set a precedent of the government dipping into pension plans, and I agree with that position. I was interested to see on Northbeat last night that in fact, the government had a precedent, I believe it is the federal government, I do not think it is the territorial government, but governments have dipped into union money. I

do not agree with that, but the option remains that had the Members agreed to spend all or a portion of the surplus money, transfer it to general funds, that is an option that we could have exercised and that would not constitute the government dipping into a pension fund. It would be the other way around, where the beneficiaries of pensions are voluntarily giving the money back into government funds.

I just wanted to add that point. I agree with the Member for Inuvik Boot Lake that the responses I have been getting from the public are that I am on the right side with the public. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Ms. Lee. General comments. Mr. McLeod.

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Again, I want to reinforce my comments yesterday and state that I will not support this bill. It is very hard to consider such a decision. When you look at the surplus that is in this plan and look at the state that my communities are in, it really makes it an easy decision on my part.

We saw this year a small injection in terms of housing capital put into the North, around \$7 million, and it has resulted in 300 new units in the Northwest Territories. We start looking at a surplus of \$8 million in this plan, I can see some good ways to spend it.

I do not believe, and yesterday I said that in my opinion, we should terminate all supplementary pensions, because as long as there are people getting a supplementary pension from this government, it will continue to plague us. It will never go away. There will always be people who get elected in, whether it is this Assembly, the 15th Assembly, the 16th Assembly, whenever, that will look back and see some people collecting a benefit, a pension, and the grass always looks greener on the other side of the fence, and them saying "Why not me?"

I cannot support it. I will not support it. I will not be supporting any of the many amendments that are out there. I believe some of these amendments are pressure tactics to be used against some of us voting against it. I do not appreciate that. I think we should be allowed to vote freely on this. Cabinet has been given that freedom by the Premier and we all deserve that right.

That is my position on it and I do not plan to change it. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. General comments. What is the wish of the committee? Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Sorry, I just want to take this opportunity to say that I know there has been a lot of animosity, and I just asked my colleague next to me why he does not get any heckling when he speaks on a position, but I seem to get it all the time. Anyway, I want to say that I believe in free debate, I believe we had a very good debate yesterday. I thought it was really good.

-- Interjection

MS. LEE: I am speaking to the bill.

-- Interjection

MS. LEE: And you can speak again, as long as I wait for everyone to speak, I believe. I would like to say that I appreciate the position of everyone and that I appreciate that everyone articulated their position. I believe that as much as I have the right to speak here on behalf of my constituents, I appreciate that everyone else here has the right to take their position. The only people we are accountable to are the people out there.

I do not mean any disrespect or anything personal in saying what I say in this House, as passionate -- and my choice of words may offend some. Every word I use I choose carefully, and I mean what I say. I am prepared to stand by them. I respect others to say that.

I would never pressure anyone else to do anything or try to convince them. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

-- Applause

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Is the committee ready for clause by clause?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 1, part 1, clause 1.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Nay.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Clause 2.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Nay.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 2, clause 3.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Nay.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 3, clause 4.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Nay.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Clause 5. Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Mr. Chairman, I was not anxious to see...actually, I was opposed to seeing this bill come forward. It obviously had enough support to proceed. We recently had a panel take a look at our compensation. The panel came back and they did recommend that we take a look at our pension, so while I think it is right that we examine the pension issue, the panel was also very clear that the recommendations they made regarding our compensation should come into effect after the next election.

That means that the Members are not seen to be voting for a benefit that they themselves can get, and it also makes it a situation where it becomes an issue in the next election, so that those Members who choose to run again or new Members can discuss during the election whether or not they support the pension and have an opportunity then to hear from their constituents what their opinions are.

For that reason, I would like to propose an amendment to this bill. The purpose of this amendment would be to have the bill not be in effect for those of us who are elected to the 14th Assembly. The bill would come into force on dissolution of the 14th Assembly, so it would only affect Members who were elected to the 15th Assembly.

Committee Motion 12-14(5): To Amend Clause 5 of Bill 7 by Deleting Proposed Subsections 6(5) and (6) (Defeated)

Therefore, Mr. Chairman,

I MOVE that clause 5 of Bill 7 be amended by deleting proposed subsections 6(5) and 6(6). Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): The motion is being circulated. There is a motion on the floor. The motion is in order. To the motion. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: I just want to maintain my practice of putting on record, on this bill anyway, my opinion. I am not sure if I can make my position clear but I am going to vote no on this motion because I do not agree with the principle of the bill. At the same time, and also, I am hesitant to pass something...I guess yesterday my position was this sort of supplementary pension was not the right thing. Whatever was set up in the last Assembly was not the right thing. It is not the right thing in this Assembly. If I stay logical with that, I cannot agree with that for the 15th Assembly.

At the same time, I see the merit in this, in that yesterday, somehow we agreed to bypass the public hearing stage. This is not going to go to a public hearing. Perhaps if we were able to have this motion passed, then it would give the public an opportunity in the next election about whether or not they support this pension or not.

At the same time, democratic...

-- Interjection

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Ms. Lee, could you stick to the motion please? To the motion.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This motion just came in front of me and I am thinking aloud. My apologies. I am trying to explain why merits of making this come into effect at the end of this Assembly...I am trying to state the pros and cons of that. I can see the merits in this in the interest of the public. Since I disagree with the principle of the bill, I have to vote against it. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Ms. Lee. To the motion. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: I would like to speak to the motion. Yesterday, I listened carefully to everything that everyone had to say, and certainly a number of Members did make a good point in that we cannot be seen to be providing something to ourselves that we were not aware of when we ran for election. Clearly we understood what the pension was when each of us ran.

I do not want to be seen to be abusing my power, as someone said yesterday. That is not my intention. At the same time, as I mentioned yesterday, we have a surplus in our pension plan. This is not money that is coming out of the public purse. I

support the proposed amendment. I think it makes sense that we vote this and have it come in with the next Legislative Assembly. That way, the voters can choose whether or not they like what we have done here. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

-- Applause

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. To the motion. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I know what the intent of the motion is, but like I stated earlier, coming from the 13th Assembly and then being here dealing with this Supplementary Retiring Allowances Act, it is pretty hard to sit here and be told by Members who have a full pension and basically have it made, and for Members who have served, in my case, once I finish with the 14th Assembly, it will be eight years with no pension. I find it self-serving that we are sitting here with a few individuals around us who have the full pension, have received the retirement assistance pension from another supplementary.

I have thought long and hard about what has happened in the 13th Assembly and then being here today, the same people who had a pension last time were giving us advice, and bad advice, in regard to how we dealt with it. I am not going to get burned twice on something that I feel that I have served, if not more than what is needed, to get the pension in the previous process, which was two terms or six years.

I am succeeding my six years and my two terms presently in the 14th Assembly. For someone who got the pension under that term to put this type of amendment or motion forth, I find it deplorable that they have a full pension, but for Members who basically should, under the rules that were previously established under the previous supplementary, have been able to qualify because of having two terms.

I for one will be voting against this on the principle that I do not think it is right for people who are eligible for a full pension, who basically got the golden handshake, telling us "Sorry, your quality of service in the Legislature is less important than prior Members." I for one take offense to that and I for one will be voting against this.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is defeated. Clause 5, page 3. Mr. Krutko.

Committee Motion 13-14(5): To Amend Clause 5 of Bill 7 by Substituting New Wording for Proposed Subsections 6(5) and (6) (Defeated)

MR. KRUTKO: Mr. Chairman,

I MOVE that clause 5 of Bill 7 be amended by deleting subsections 6(5) and (6) and by substituting the following:

- (5) A Member who files an election under paragraph 5.2(2)(a) of the Supplementary Retiring Allowances Act shall contribute to the fund, for each month or portion of a month during the period of service commencing December 7, 1999 and ending immediately before the day on which a Member files the election, 2.5 percent of 1/12 of the lesser of:

(a) the pensionable remuneration and earnings paid to the Member in the year in which the month occurs; and

(b) the defined benefit limit divided by two percent.

- (6) A Member who files elections under both paragraph 5.2(2)(a) and subsection 5.3(2) of the Supplementary Retiring Allowances Act shall contribute to the fund for each month or portion of a month during the period of credited service described in subsection 5.3(1) of the Supplementary Retiring Allowances Act, 2.5 percent of 1/12 of the lesser of:

(a) the pensionable remuneration and earnings paid to the Member in the year in which the month occurs; and

(b) the defined benefit limit divided by two percent.

- (7) A contribution by a Member under subsection (5) or (6) must be made by way of deduction in accordance with subsection 6.1 during the 14th Legislative Assembly.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): The motion has been circulated. There is a motion on the floor. The motion is in order. To the motion. Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Mr. Chairman, I was wondering if we might have some explanation about what this amendment would accomplish. Perhaps the Law Clerk or somebody, Ms. Buckland, could put it in plain English for us please?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Ms. Buckland, could you provide some information on that? Thank you.

MS. BUCKLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is one of three motions that would affect a change to the bill, so that rather than requiring a payment for prior service during the 13th Legislative Assembly to be based on the actuarial present value of that service, it simply requires that a contribution for that service be deducted from the Member's salary.

The bill as written says that a deduction will be taken for prior service during the 14th Legislative Assembly, so service during the 13th Legislative Assembly would be treated the same way. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Ms. Buckland. Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am afraid I still did not really understand what the effect is here. Is this then saying that rather than a Member having to purchase back their service for the 13th Assembly, it would be funded through the surplus of the pension then?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Ms. Buckland.

MS. BUCKLAND: To a large part, it would be, except that there is a contribution expected from the Member as well. For instance, if the supplementary plan had continued throughout the 13th Legislative Assembly, it would have required a contribution of about 2.5 percent. That is what this would require.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Ms. Buckland. To the motion. Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I guess, obviously if I was proposing that the pension not start until the 15th Assembly, I would have to just be on record as opposing this amendment, which would allow it to go back to the 13th Assembly even more easily.

I think the Members of the 13th Assembly voted democratically to remove that pension. I just was reviewing Hansard and I noticed that neither Mr. Krutko nor I were in the House when that vote took place. It was a recorded vote and neither of us were there.

I think the vote was made. It was a decision made by the 13th Assembly and we have to respect that. As I said, I do not have a problem with modifying the pension, but I think it is important that we not be seen to be doing it for ourselves and have it come in for the 15th Assembly and let them decide whether or not they are going to keep it. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Dent. To the motion. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a question as well on the meaning of this clause. I wonder if either the Law Clerk, Clerk of the House or the legal counsel could provide me with the information as to approximate value of the contribution that would come out of the surplus budget to reinstate this, for the average salary of a Member for the last Assembly?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Hamilton.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As Ms. Buckland indicated, the present clause indicates that a Member who was a Member of the 13th Assembly may buy back his years of service. That total cost would be the responsibility of the Member, if the Member chose to do that. Taking those Members who would be eligible to do that from the 13th Assembly who are sitting in the 14th Assembly, that contribution required by any of those Members ranges from \$86,000 to \$154,000, within that range, depending on the Member, the length of service, and the amount of pensionable income they have had.

A particular Member may have to put in an amount between, as I indicated, \$86,000 and \$154,000, which would be the highest.

The intention, as I understand, of this amendment is to allow that not be the total responsibility of the Member. It would allow for the Member to have to contribute 2.5 percent, as if he or she had been contributing through the life of the 13th Assembly when they were a Member. Obviously, when you have some contributions coming from a Member, you need to have some contributions coming from the fund. The intention would be that the other part of that would come from the surplus and would reduce the surplus under the supplementary plan.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Hamilton. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Am I correct in thinking then that \$86,000, or whatever figure we have here, is 2.5 percent of the salary over four years? Is that what it works out to?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Ms. Buckland.

MS. BUCKLAND: No, the figures that Mr. Hamilton just gave are based on the actuary's calculations of prior service.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Ms. Buckland. To the motion. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: I am sorry. I am just not good with figures. Can I get Mr. Hamilton to explain to me again, I do not understand actuarial value of what the pension would have been had the Members from the 13th Assembly been eligible. I guess what I want to know is if the Members were allowed to do whatever it is they were allowed to do under this thing, if it got passed -- I am really speaking like a lawyer here -- how much would the Members be required to put in and how much would come out of the surplus funds?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Hamilton.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton): Mr. Chairman, the total cost of contributions, if all the Members who were Members -- and there are nine Members who would be eligible to buy back their service in the 13th Assembly -- the total cost to do that would be about \$970,000 for those nine Members to buy back their pension.

If this amendment was passed, then those nine Members -- if they chose to do it, of course, it is a choice -- if they choose to elect to buy back, would have to pay the contribution of 2.5 percent.

I apologize, Mr. Chairman. These figures are not accurate. They are within a range. The Member's contribution would be \$90,000 to \$100,000 of that \$970,000. The \$870,000, if it is \$100,000, the \$870,000 would come from the surplus.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Hamilton. To the motion. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Just for the record, Mr. Chairman, obviously it is not a surprise that I will be voting against this motion, but I have to just put it on record that I do understand and appreciate the grievances the Members who were Members of the 13th Assembly have about what has transpired here. I do not know why, but I feel it is important to state that, but my vote will be no, regardless. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Ms. Lee. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? Opposed? The motion is defeated. Page 3, clause 5.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 4, clause 6.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 4, clause 7.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 5, clause 8.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Clause 9.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Clause 10.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Clause 11.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): We will go to page 6, clause 12.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 7, clause 13.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 8, clause 14.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 9, clause 15.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Clause 16.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Clause 17.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Clause 18.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Nay.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 10, clause 19.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 10, clause 20.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 10, clause 21.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 11, clause 22.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 12, clause 23.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 12, clause 24.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 13, clause 25.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Part 2, clause 26.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Clause 27.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Clause 28.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 14, clause 29.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 16, clause 30.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Clause 31.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 17, clause 32.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 18, clause 33. Mr. Handley.

Committee Motion 14-14(5): To Amend Clause 33 of Bill 7 by Adding New Wording After Proposed Subsection 5.3 (Carried)

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman,

I MOVE that clause 33 of Bill 7 be amended by adding the following after proposed subsection 5.3:

5.3.1. The Speaker shall, as soon as possible after the end of each fiscal year, lay before the Legislative Assembly copies of the elections filed by Members under subsections 5.2(2) and 5.3(2).

The purpose of this amendment, Mr. Chairman, is keeping with our belief in an open and transparent government. I think the public have a right to know who is taking part in this supplementary plan. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): The motion is being circulated. The motion has been circulated. There is a motion on the floor. The motion is in order. To the motion. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think that those Members, the public out there know that this has been discussed without the public knowing, without the question or the notion of transparency and accountability. I am going to vote against this motion in keeping with my stance on this bill on principle.

I agree. I feel the same, and I have said so publicly, that the purpose of this is...I am not imputing any motives here, but I feel that given the consideration and the debate surrounding this, that this is really a way of making...I do not know. I am not going to say threat. I think another Member used that, but it is really...I do not even know how to explain it. I think this is a distraction. I think it is a side issue. I think the decision and the position to take is whether you support this motion to create a new pension or not. What happens afterwards is really a private matter.

I do appreciate that Members' salaries and benefits, for the most part, is public information and I respect that. I think there is more to this. I do not condone that in any way. My vote will be no on the basis of my general position about this supplementary pension. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Ms. Lee. To the motion. Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I take a contrary point of view. I have no doubt that...I should not say that I have no doubt. If Ms. Lee is right, that this was a pressure tactic, I have no doubt that I am one of the people it is aimed at. However, I also agree that everything this government does, as far as possible, should be open to the public. I think that our compensation package should be entirely open to the public.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. DENT: Therefore, I will support this motion. If the bill is going to pass, then the public has the right to know who has bought into the pension plan. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Dent. To the motion. Mr. Steen.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Mr. Chairman, I have a question. Does this apply to Members when they are serving, or even when your term is up and you are no longer a Member, is the Speaker still going to be required to table this information?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Steen. Ms. Buckland, can you give some clarification to that?

MS. BUCKLAND: Each declaration would only be tabled once. If you make a declaration in this Legislative Assembly, it would only be tabled in this Legislative Assembly.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Ms. Buckland. To the motion. Mr. Steen.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Mr. Chairman, if it is only going to be tabled once, what is the purpose of having it tabled annually?

-- Laughter

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. Hamilton.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton): Mr. Chairman, the amendment would require that any Member of the 14th Assembly who opts into the plan, if this bill is passed, that declaration would then be tabled. If you are a Member of the 14th Assembly and you opt in, you only have to opt in once. If you were re-elected for the 15th Assembly, you would not be required to fill out another form.

However, any new Member coming into the 15th Assembly would also have to opt in, if they wished. It is not automatic. You are not automatically a member of the plan. They too would have to fill out a form. That would be tabled once only.

I think the terminology, each fiscal year, at the end of the fiscal year, would be just in case there was a by-election and a new Member came in.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Hamilton. Mr. Steen, does that answer your question?

HON. VINCE STEEN: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): To the motion. Mr. Nitah.

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I am just wondering if this motion sets any kind of precedence within government, not just for elected officials, but it is a Privacy Act issue, is it not?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Nitah. Mr. Handley, did you want to clarify that?

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, no. I think because it is a question of whether or not the privacy applies, I do not believe it does, but I would defer to Ms. Buckland.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Ms. Buckland.

MS. BUCKLAND: The Members of the Legislative Assembly can decide for themselves what information about themselves they want made public and what needs to be kept private. Certainly there are other declarations and other information that is required to be tabled.

For instance, under the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, information about your salaries and allowances and that sort of thing are required to be tabled each year as well. This is very similar to that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Ms. Buckland. Mr. Nitah.

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So this motion does not effect political appointees, such as deputy ministers who are within the Public Services Act but are political appointees? This motion does not affect their contracts and their pensions? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Nitah. Could we ask our law clerk to define that situation?

MS. PETERSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. No, it does not.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Ms. Peterson. To the motion. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am going to vote in favour of the motion. I did not really have a feeling about it until I heard Ms. Lee suggest that this public debate was a wonderful thing, but said that whether or not a person took the pension was a private matter. That will drive me to support this motion. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Bell.

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will be supporting this. I think there is something very obvious here, and that is that there are two things that a Member can take from this. You can vote no, condemn the pension and that way you will get the political upside and political credit for voting no. Or you could take the pension.

I would suggest that possibly in a politically perfect world, you could do both, which maybe the act of privacy would enable, but I do not think that is fair. I certainly do not consider it a pressure tactic or a threat.

I suppose if you consider accountability a threat, then you might, but government has to be accountable. I think it should not do anything that it would not want to see the light of day and could not pass scrutiny. If you are going to sign up for this pension, I think that should be something you have to make known to the electorate.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Bell. To the motion. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am looking for some clarity here. When Members' remuneration or how we are paid and what benefits we receive are tabled, is the pension information not also tabled? Not the amount of pension, but is not who is on the pension and what plan they are on, is that not already public information?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you. Point of order, Ms. Lee.

Point of Order

MS. LEE: I am sorry. I do not know the rule as well as I should, but I know that with a point of privilege, you have to raise your point of order at the earliest opportunity. I want to raise a point of order on the statement that was made by Mr. Bell.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Ms. Lee. On the point of order, you will have to state the rule you feel is being broken or describe the rule that is being broken.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I raise a point of order in the rule book, section 23(i), which I think a lot of people here know about. It speaks to a Member who imputes false or hidden motives to another Member.

I read from a repeated statement by the Member for Yellowknife South that somehow, anyone here who opposes this pension is doing it for a political purpose, that we are taking a stance that is popular to the public. We are taking this stance because it is imputing motive. It is imputing why we are taking this position we are taking. That we are doing this because this is what the public wants, but really inside, in the dark side inside of our little hearts, we are really wanting this money. I have a great objection to that. This was pointed out in our debate yesterday.

I stated earlier that I respect the position taken by every Member here. I have a freedom to speak. I have every good conscience for saying and stating my position here.

I do not think it is proper. I do not think it is respecting my privilege as a Member here to impute motive that I somehow have a double standard here, that I am doing what is popular out there, but really, that I am going to take the money. I guess for some people, that is the only way to look at this.

I believe it is really infringing on my conscience and my integrity. I believe there is a point of order. I ask for a ruling on this point. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Ms. Lee, the Chair did not hear anything from the Member for Yellowknife

South that would impute motive. However, we can go through the unedited Hansard and reserve a ruling for that at a later date. Thank you. To the motion. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe Mr. Roland had a question. I was just going to follow up on his question, but he can have his question back.

-- Laughter

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I had asked a question earlier. Right now, my understanding is that when information of Members and their pay and benefits is tabled, information on who is on the pension and what pension they are on is already public information. Is that not correct?

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

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton): Mr. Chairman, yes, the Member is correct. There is a requirement under the Retiring Allowances Act and the Supplementary Retiring Allowances Act that the Speaker table annually the financial statements of the supplementary plan as well as what is called the pension administration report, which outlines the financial position, and the administration of both the registered plan and the supplementary plan is required to be tabled annually with the type of information that the Member indicated.

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

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Then I wonder, why the motion? It is already an annual practice to table that information, so it makes no sense for that. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Roland. To the motion. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was going to follow up on the same point made by Mr. Roland, so I do not see a need for this motion. The practice is already in place. There is a reporting mechanism there and I think there is no need for this motion.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, in putting forward the motion, my intention certainly was not to put pressure tactics on anybody. It was just simply that the public has a right to know what our pay and benefits package is for doing this job. I am quite satisfied if this information is already made available somewhere else, I was not aware of that. The advice I was given was not that it was. So if it is already there somewhere else, I do not have a problem with withdrawing the motion. However, I want to make sure that is the case, that it is there. I would ask Mr. Hamilton, Mr. Chairman, to give some clarification on, do we get the same information on this annual report?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mr. Hamilton, could you clarify whether this information is already public knowledge?

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton): Mr. Chairman, the pension administration report that is tabled annually by the Speaker, and I happen to have a copy of the one that was tabled previously, does contain a list of the membership information, which does currently list the number of Members who are in the registered plan and how many Members are still active in the supplementary plan, and also does list the pensioners that receive pension under both the registered plan and the supplementary plan.

The only problem or issue may be is that this information is information that is provided by our actuary and then it is the Board of Management that decides the content of this information. All the act requires is that there be an annual report. The act does not say what should or should not be in that report. So what is in this report is really what the Board of Management decides what is released from this report. It is not prescribed in law that all this stuff should be in it. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Then I agree that we should keep the motion rather than having some Board of Management at some future time deciding what should go in and what should not go in. I would like to keep the motion on the table. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

-- Applause

Clause 33, as amended?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 21, clause 34.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 23, clause 35.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Clause 36.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 24, clause 37.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 25, clause 38?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Clause 39?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Clause 40?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 26, clause 41?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Clause 42?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 27, clause 43?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Bill as a whole, as amended?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Does the committee agree that Bill 7 is ready for third reading as amended?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Bill 7 is now ready for third reading as amended. Thank you, Mr. Minister, and your witnesses. Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to recommend that we continue consideration of Bill 2 and Committee Reports 1 through 3 concurrently, specifically to consider the budget for the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Dent. We will continue with the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs. Would the Minister have any opening remarks? Mr. Antoine.

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Yes, I do, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I would like to present the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs' 2002-2003 draft main estimates for the committee's consideration.

Although the ministry is small in size compared to other departments in this government, its work has a great impact on the long-term governance arrangements in the Northwest Territories. The Ministry continues to make every effort to deliver its mandated responsibilities in an efficient and effective manner and to produce tangible results.

The ministry's 2002-2003 proposed budget is \$7,032,000, which is broken down as follows:

- \$4,085,000 for compensation and benefits
- \$1,050,000 for grants and contributions
- \$1,897,000 for other expenses

The ministry does not collect any revenue and does not require capital funding.

The ministry has 38 positions. Additionally, the ministry receives \$290,000 from Canada to fund three positions to coordinate and manage the implementation of settled land claims.

The MAA budget increased by 16 percent as a result of the transfer of \$1,148,000 for three positions and O and M funding within the Intergovernmental Forum Secretariat to the ministry, and the inclusion of \$500,000 in one-time funding to celebrate the inauguration of National Aboriginal Day as a statutory holiday in the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to speak briefly about the Living History Project. The board of directors of the Living History Society is comprised of individuals from across the Northwest Territories. They have volunteered their time and energy to promote a series of activities that celebrate the cultural and political history of the Northwest Territories, focusing on our history over the past 25 years. This initiative is in keeping with the objectives of this government to promote and celebrate the history and culture of the Northwest Territories. The symposium that the society is hosting will attract national attention and is an ideal opportunity for the Northwest Territories to speak of its achievements and to promote itself to the rest of the country.

Mr. Chairman, the government concurs with the recommendation of the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight to remove the funding for the Living History Project from the 2002-2003 Main Estimates. At the appropriate time during the review of the budget for the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, we will propose a motion to this effect. It is important to note that the government will return with a supplementary funding request after review and consideration of a formal funding proposal from the Living History Society.

Mr. Chairman, before I conclude my opening remarks, I would like to briefly note five major achievements:

- In May 2001, the Deh Cho Framework and Interim Measures Agreements were signed in Fort Simpson.
- In the Beaufort-Delta, our negotiators have initialled a self-government agreement-in-principle with the Gwich'in and Inuvialuit. The parties are now waiting for the federal government to complete their internal approval process so that a formal signing of this agreement can be held in the spring in the Delta.
- In Fort Smith, the members of the Salt River First Nation voted to ratify its Treaty Land Entitlement Agreement just before Christmas. The agreement is now being sent to the parties for signature. As a matter of fact, I signed the agreement on behalf of the GNWT in January. Salt River is planning to hold a more formal signing ceremony and celebration in June.
- In the fall, I travelled to Fort Smith with the MLAs from Tu Nedhe and Thebacha to sign a Political Accord with the president and board of directors of the South Slave Metis Tribal Council.
- Through the Intergovernmental Forum, we have been working with our partners to build and strengthen intergovernmental relationships in the Northwest Territories. An important component of the work of the IGF was the Memorandum of Intent on Devolution and Resource Revenue Sharing agreed to in Inuvik. In this regard, Mr. Chairman, we are moving forward with the development of a mandate and appointment of a negotiation team prior to the March 31 deadline as set out in the MOI.

Mahsi, Mr. Chairman. I would be pleased to answer any questions the committee may have. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Antoine. I would like to call on the standing committee reviewing the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs. Mr. Nitah.

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development has reviewed the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs annual budget. The Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs is one of three separate and distinct programs operated within the Department of Executive. The ministry coordinates the government's participation in lands, resources and self-government negotiations and coordinating the implementation of final agreements on behalf of the Government of the Northwest Territories.

The Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development met on January 23, 2002, with Minister Antoine and his staff to review the ministry's 2002-2003 draft main estimates.

The Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs projected a \$2,148,000 increase in its operation expenditures. This increase is due in part to the \$1,000,000 funding for National Aboriginal Day celebrations and the Living History Project. The remaining \$1,148,000 increase is due to the transfer of the Intergovernmental Forum from the Department of the Executive to the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs.

Implementation of Settled Land Claim Agreements

Mr. Chairman, the committee is concerned about the implementation process for settled land claims in the Northwest Territories. The committee is concerned that GNWT departments may or may not be properly adhering to the responsibilities and guidelines established by the settled land claim agreements. The committee is also concerned that there does not appear to be a watchdog element for the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs to ensure that other departments follow the guidelines.

The Minister stated that if they become aware of a problem that they will address it with the other department. The committee would like to see the ministry with a clear responsibility in this area.

The committee feels that there is a need for a government-wide policy and a consistent interpretation of that policy across all government departments -- very important, Mr. Chairman.

The committee also pointed out that there were a number of areas, including wildlife and forestry management, where the GNWT has an obligation to pass legislation in order to fully implement settled land claim agreements in the Northwest Territories.

The committee suggested that there be a point of contact for communities and organizations seeking assistance with specific land claims agreements and implementation plans. The department agreed that was an excellent suggestion and promised to look into it, and we are thankful for that.

National Aboriginal Day and the Living History Project

Mr. Chairman, as stated previously under general comments, members of the committee noted that \$1,000,000 had been

allocated for National Aboriginal Day celebrations, which included the Living History Project.

After further questioning, it was learned that the Living History Project had not been separately identified. Members requested a full breakdown of both projects and that the projects be separated in order to fully identify individual funding. The department agreed to this suggestion.

Members also noted a lack of documentation explaining the plans of the society and its funding requirements. The committee raised concerns that the Living History Project appears to have been given special funding preference compared to other non-profit groups. Members also pointed out that funding for cultural groups usually comes through the Department of Education, Culture and Employment. Finally, the committee was also concerned with the amount of money allocated for this new initiative when other more vital programs could use money as well. The Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development referred this item to the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight for review. I guess we felt that it had government-wide ramifications.

Intergovernmental Forum (IGF)

Mr. Chairman, the committee noted the recent move of the Intergovernmental Forum to the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs from the Department of the Executive. While the committee recognized that the placement of the IGF fits well into the mandate of Aboriginal Affairs, it was concerned to see that the IGF was not accounted for in the ministry's accounting structure or activity descriptions. The ministry responded that due to the shuffle late in the year that they were unable to alter their main estimates. The ministry stated that changes would be made before the main estimates went to the House for consideration.

Federal Cost-Sharing Funding Arrangements

The committee remains confused about the placement of dollars for the IGF. The committee noted that while federal funding was not yet confirmed for the continuation of the IGF, that the ministry had still placed dollars within their budget for that purpose. However, when the committee asked why there were no ministry dollars set aside for the new Economic Development Advisory Forum under the IGF, the committee was told that it was because the ministry had not yet received confirmation of funding from the federal government. This was also the case for the capacity building aspect of the IGF. The committee would like to see a more standardized reporting of funds that rely on cost sharing with the federal government.

Funding for Negotiations

Finally, Mr. Chairman, it was raised by the committee that aboriginal groups may not have enough funding to adequately participate in self-government negotiations. Current funding arrangements lie with the federal government. Funds are offered as a loan against the final settlement after completion of settled land claim agreements. A number of communities are against this method of funding but do not have an alternative. In response, the ministry stated that negotiations are a federal responsibility and that the ministry works with the federal government to encourage them to work with aboriginal groups.

The ministry suggested that it does work directly with aboriginal groups if groups approach them for help.

That is the report of the committee, and I thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Nitah. Would the Minister like to bring in witnesses?

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Antoine. Does the committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Sergeant-at-Arms, escort the witnesses in please. Minister Antoine, would you please introduce your witnesses for the record?

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, to my left is Mr. Richard Bargery, deputy minister for the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs. To my right is Ms. Veronica Puskas, manager of planning and analysis for the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Antoine. General comments? Detail? Page 2-59, Aboriginal Affairs, operations expense, total operation expense, \$7,032,000. Mr. Antoine.

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I think this is the place where I am going to make a motion on the Living History Project.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Antoine. Go ahead with your motion.

Committee Motion 15-14(5): To Delete \$250,000 From Aboriginal Affairs Activity Summary (Carried)

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Mr. Chairman,

I MOVE that \$250,000 identified for the Living History Project be deleted from the Aboriginal Affairs activity summary and the total operations expense in the 2002-2003 main estimates. Thank you.

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

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I am quite pleased that the government and the Minister have chosen to respond to the committee recommendation in this way. One question for the Minister before we vote on this.

I noted in his opening comments, he mentioned that the government would likely return with a request for supplementary funding. I was wondering if the government was also going to keep in mind the committee request to ensure that is brought forward through the Department of Education, Culture and Employment?

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

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, once this is deleted, and if the project moves forward, I will pass it by Cabinet. I think it is a Cabinet decision to decide where it is going to go. I will approach it that way. I cannot commit to the Member here whether it is going to go to Education, Culture and Employment, but I will certainly pass that message along. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Antoine. Mr. Nitah, did you have a question?

MR. NITAH: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to go back to page 2-28.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): There is a motion on the floor, Mr. Nitah. To the motion. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you. To the motion, I will be speaking in favour of the motion. I did want to say for the record, Mr. Chairman, I was an early and avid supporter of the objectives and the concepts that this society is working on. I continue to be so.

The situation we are here with, deleting a proposed appropriation, is not a signal from me that I am opposing the work of this society. I still support it. I do look forward to the society bringing plans forward and in such a way that we can find ways that this government can participate, that we can get value out of this and we can see this very worthwhile project continue. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Braden. To the motion. Question has been called. The Chair does not recognize a quorum. Ring the bells.

-- Ringing of Bells

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

-- Applause

With the passage of Committee Motion 15-14(5), I will call the revised figure. Aboriginal Affairs, budget summary, total operations expense, \$6,782,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Aboriginal Affairs, grants and contributions, total grants, \$550,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Contributions. Given the passage of Committee Motion 15-14(5), I will call the revised figure for contributions, total contributions, \$400,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 2-62, total contributions, \$400,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you. Total grants and contributions, revised figure, \$950,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 263, which continues on to page 265, detail of work performed on behalf of third parties, total department, \$704,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Information item, active positions.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): We will go back to Aboriginal Affairs, page 2-57. With the passage of Committee Motion 15-14(5), I will call the revised figure, Aboriginal Affairs, program summary, operations expense, total operations expense, \$6,782,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you. That concludes the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs. Does the committee agree consideration of the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs is concluded?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Minister, and your witnesses. We are going to go back to page 2-5 and conclude the Department of the Executive. With the passage of Committee Motion 15-14(5), I will call the revised figure for the Executive, department summary, operations expense, total operations expense, \$51,772,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you. Does the committee agree that consideration of the main estimates for the Department of the Executive is now concluded?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Mr. Chairman, I would like to recommend that we continue consideration of Bill 2 and get into consideration of the Department of Public Works and Services.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): We will continue on with the Department of Public Works and Services. Does the Minister have any opening comments? Mr. Steen.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, my opening comments for Public Works.

Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to present the Department of Public Works and Services main estimates for the fiscal year 2002-2003.

The estimates propose a department operations and maintenance budget for 2002-2003 of \$41,300,000, and a capital acquisition plan of \$3.8 million.

These resources will be used to provide critical support services to departments and communities, including:

- The operation and maintenance of infrastructure;
- Participation in the safe water initiative;
- Management of capital construction projects;
- Safety and inspection services;
- Leasing of government offices;
- Provision of records management services; and
- Monitoring and intervention in northern and national telecommunication proceedings.

The department also manages an additional \$100 million on behalf of its clients through a number of revolving funds, chargebacks and capital transfers. Through the use of these funds, the department provides computer and data communications services for government offices throughout the Territory, fuel services for 16 communities, and renovation and construction of critical building infrastructure.

As other departments work to achieve government objectives by delivering direct services to our residents, Public Works and Services provides necessary technical and professional support to those departments.

Mr. Chairman, there are many examples of the kind of support Public Works and Services provides to departments as they attempt to achieve an appropriate balance between:

- The expectations of our residents for high quality services;
- The practical constraints of operating in our difficult northern environment; and
- The limitations of our current budgets.

I would like to take a moment to mention a few of those services.

The many successful building and infrastructure projects are often taken for granted, but I would like to mention today the new Inuvik Regional Health and Social Services Centre and the Aklavik Health Centre, which are under construction this year, the community office complex in Rae Lakes being built by the local community development corporation, the new correctional facilities going up in Inuvik and Yellowknife, and the water supply projects in Tulita and Fort McPherson. These are all important community and regional projects that will contribute in a positive way to achieving the government's long-term objectives. Public Works and Services is a vital part of the team responsible for delivering these projects.

Public Works and Services also provides information systems and communication services for use by the government. More and more, the ability of the government to provide services to northern residents is dependent upon the availability of secure and reliable information and communication systems.

Another important role for this department is to be a key member of the GNWT team responsible for ensuring the quality of community drinking water. Working closely with the Departments of Health and Social Services and Municipal and Community Affairs, Public Works and Services provides

technical support for the design, construction, operation and maintenance of community water systems.

Finally, I would like to mention the provision of essential fuel services. Through the Petroleum Products Revolving Fund, Public Works and Services funds the provision of heating fuel and gasoline in communities where a commercial operation does not exist. This includes providing safe tank farms in these remote locations, as well as contracting with and training local fuel delivery agents to provide the services. These agents have an important function in their communities and PWS works with them to carry out this essential service.

The department strives to provide fuel services on a break-even basis. In 2000, this required an increase in retail prices to keep pace with rising costs of fuel and transportation. In December, 2001, the government decided an increase was again needed. The effective date was set for February 1, 2002. Discussions with concerned communities and Members of this Assembly prompted a second look at this decision. In response to these concerns, the scheduled increase was rescinded.

Mr. Chairman, Public Works and Services tries to be responsive and will continue to provide a high level of support to departments and to the people of the NWT. The budget we are reviewing today will contribute to achieving this objective.

Mr. Chairman, that concludes my opening remarks. I would be happy to answer any questions Members may have. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Steen. At this time, I would like to ask the chair of the committee responsible for overseeing or reviewing the department's main estimates, Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Department of Public Works and Services' -- or PWS, as we call it at times -- mandate is to provide services, support and leadership in the areas of: asset management, procurement, records management, computer systems and telecommunications, community fuel provision and community water systems.

The Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development met with the Minister and his staff to review the 2002-2003 draft main estimates on January 17, 2002.

The department proposed an increase of \$233,000 in its operation expenditures. The increase is due largely to a \$183,000 increase in the department's amortization estimate and a \$50,000 increase in other subsequent FMBS approvals.

Review of POL Delivery, Supply and Pricing for the NWT

During the review of the main estimates the committee noted that the current debt of the petroleum revolving fund was very close to its legislated limit of \$5,000,000 (Revolving Funds Act, Section 7(3)). The department explained that previous years' lack of price increases failed to cover costs and led to the large build-up of debt.

The department stated that an increase in the price of fuel would assist in the management of their current debt, however, the department predicted a further increase in the debt of approximately \$200,000 by the end of next fiscal year.

Committee members raised concern that the 16 communities serviced by the petroleum products division would be unfairly held liable for the payment of this large debt.

In response, the Minister for Public Works and Services stated that he was prepared to recommend to the Financial Management Board that a portion of the recovery fund be written off, prorated to the amount of involvement communities that have been privatized would have been paying. Committee members look forward to seeing this recommendation, in order to assure their communities that they would not be held responsible for the full amount of the debt of the petroleum revolving fund.

On January 23, 2002, it was announced that fuel prices were being increased in 16 remote settlements in the NWT by four-and-a-half cents a litre. Given that the world market price for fuel has declined drastically over the past six months, members would find it difficult to justify fuel increases for their constituents. Members are increasingly concerned about the high price of fuel in their communities and its resultant increases in costs to residents, businesses, government and non-profit organizations, especially in view of the low prices for fuel on the world market and in turn, communities serviced by private contractors.

The committee would also like to point out that the legislated purpose of the revolving fund is to "stabilize the prices of petroleum products that are purchased, sold and distributed by the Government of the Northwest Territories." (Revolving Funds Act, Section 7(2))

Information provided in a recent letter informed the committee that the proposed price increase for fuel has been rescinded. While members are pleased to hear that their communities will not be charged more than originally anticipated for fuel, the committee remains concerned about the entire issue of fuel pricing and the petroleum revolving fund's considerable debt.

Discussions regarding the timing of the purchase of fuel and storage for remote communities made it clear that members are disappointed in the performance of the petroleum products division of Public Works and Services and its ability to stabilize fuel prices in the NWT.

The committee was also disappointed to hear that a decision has not yet been made about the privatization of POL in communities. The department stated that a decision regarding the Northwest Territories Power Corporation and privatization is expected for April 1, 2002. The committee noted that it has been almost a decade since the then Committee of Finance recommended the complete privatization of all petroleum products delivery. The committee also noted that in May of 1996, the deputy minister of the department stated that it would take 12 to 18 months to accomplish privatization. The committee looks forward to the decision on April 1, 2002 and a quick resolution to the matter of privatization.

Contracting Out of PWS Work

During the review of the main estimates, the Department of Public Works and Services stated that they were contracting out 88 percent of their work. The committee pointed out that many communities are now capable of independently contracting out major infrastructure requirements. Some members asked whether there was a need for a \$30,000,000 department that appears to be largely managing the

contracting of projects as opposed to actually constructing them.

Municipal Agreements

The committee has in the past noted that municipal agreements are extremely limiting to communities in their ability to either complete necessary repairs using their own forces or to contract out for the work to be done. The contracts currently state that Public Works and Services must complete the repairs with or without notification of the community and that the department may then bill the community for their services. The community then has no option but to pay the bill presented, despite the fact that they may have been able to complete the repairs with their own staff and equipment at far less cost.

The committee stated that present municipal contracts are out of date and require re-negotiating. The department initially stated that it was up to communities to approach the department with a request to re-negotiate. Upon further questioning, the Minister committed to providing communities with new draft agreements.

The committee looks forward to seeing an update in the summer of 2002 on the response of communities to the new draft agreements and the number of which have signed agreements.

Safety of Community Water Supply

Given recent events in the south regarding the safety of water supply, the committee requested assurances that all municipal workers responsible for water maintenance systems are fully qualified and trained. The department stated that training to national standards is done by the Northern Territories Water and Waste Association. Site-specific training is then supplemented by the Department of Public Works and Services.

The department also stated that they are currently reviewing equipment, facilities, employee qualifications and operating procedures and policies.

Further discussion in the area of safe water supply revealed that while roles and responsibilities between departments may have been clearly identified within the government, there is still confusion in the communities about this complex system. When problems arise, communities are often directed from one department to another without a clear understanding of the responsible department. The committee is looking forward to seeing the results of the department's review.

Environmental Audits

The committee remains concerned about the completion of environmental audits. The department replied that it has 22 sites on its list for clean up, mostly tank farms. They also stated that all first priority sites would be cleaned up next year. The committee looks forward to seeing a progress report during the next business planning process.

Mr. Chairman, that ends the Governance and Economic Development's report on Public Works and Services draft main estimates. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Roland. At this time, I would like to ask the Minister if he will be bringing in any witnesses.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, I will.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

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

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, on my right is Mr. Bruce Rattray, deputy minister of Public Works and Services. On my left is Mike Aumond, director, petroleum products.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Welcome, witnesses. General comments? Detail? Page 59, directorate, operations expense, total operations expense, \$6,972,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Asset management, operations expense, total operations expense, \$32,645,000. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, under asset management, activity responsible for planning, design, construction, operation and maintenance of buildings, I would like to know from the department, with the increased economic activity in the large communities, at least, what is the department finding as a result of that increased activity and, as I see it, increased costs in communities to have construction done? Are the department's planning targets or the targets it uses for estimates in construction coming in with the percentage? I know there has been discussion of a 10 percent figure. Is that still the rule of thumb?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): The Minister responsible for Public Works and Services, Mr. Steen.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, in general, as the Member stated, that is still the case. We are still experiencing roughly a 10 percent increase in cost. It is reflected in the tenders and the bids we receive. I will ask Mr. Rattray if he wishes to elaborate a little on that.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): The deputy minister, Mr. Rattray.

MR. RATTRAY: Mr. Chairman, yes, we are still experiencing increased cost pressures as a result of the amount of activity that is currently going on. The tenders that went out early in the season, we were actually pleasantly surprised. Most of them were in good shape. We have noticed more recently that some of the tenders that have gone out in recent months have come in significantly over what the estimates were. I do not think that is necessarily indicating that things have gotten worse. It is just that there has been a bit of a time lag and there are increased pressures that perhaps were not allowed for when the budgets were initially put together, and the projects that were tendered later in the year rather than earlier are experiencing more of that.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Is there a figure? When you are talking about the latter part of the year in those contracts, how much out are they? Are they within the guidelines, or are we finding they are surpassing targets that are set when you talk about plus or minus 10 percent and so on? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): The deputy minister, Mr. Rattray.

MR. RATTRAY: Mr. Chairman, the two I am thinking of right now are quite significant overages. It may be not simply the 10 percent that relates to the increase in the labour costs and material costs, but they also perhaps relate to a decrease in the amount of competition, or the fact that the contractors are that much busier and they are bidding even higher because they have a lot of work on the go right now. Some of those bids are in fact 30 to 50 percent over. Again, that is not the general rule. I just happen to know of two in particular that came in within that range.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Is there work going on then with the sponsoring departments? In that sense, if a project is that high above what was initially estimated, there has to be a question of whether it would even proceed at that time, or sponsoring departments having to come up with the extra funding.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Rattray.

MR. RATTRAY: Mr. Chairman, in the two instances I am thinking of, there are discussions going on right now with the clients to determine whether or not there are aspects of the project that can be deleted in order to reduce the costs. At the same time, the clients are exploring options for providing some additional funding for them. It is expected that both of those projects will go ahead, but it will be a somewhat reduced scope and some additional funding will be required.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In the area of inspections, are you finding with the increased activity that you manage to keep up with the inspection services that are required?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Rattray.

MR. RATTRAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, thus far we have been able to keep up with the inspection services. We do not have any significant backlog on that at the present time.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Page 5-11, asset management, operations expense, total operations expense, \$32,645,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Page 5-12, asset management, grants and contributions, grants, total grants, \$260,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Page 5-15, systems and communications, operations expense, total operations expense, Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In the area of systems and communications, I would like to know what the department is doing in this area. I know there is some ongoing work at this time to do some changes to the systems and communications, which I believe the Department of Public Works is involved in to try and update equipment. What is being done in the future years, looking at this budget, to improve on that system?

I am aware right now, for example, there are firewalls being constructed, so on and so forth, but I believe there are glitches in that system. Hopefully, they are going to have that fixed. In this computer day and age, it is pretty difficult to maintain contact if you lose your email systems, for example. I would like to know if we are in fact seeing a problem in this area, or is it just ongoing work? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Rattray.

MR. RATTRAY: Mr. Chairman, there is a significant amount of work going on in the systems and communications side of business. The Knowledge Management Strategy is guiding the work. Some of the work will be improvements to the existing system. Some of it will be consolidating, so that we are not dealing with as many different types of systems. Some of those initiatives will significantly improve the efficiency of the way the systems operate.

The firewall project the Member mentioned is an exceedingly important part of the improvements to the systems at the present time. The firewalls are intended to protect the integrity of all of the systems and all of the communication networks that the government currently has in place. It is doing it by essentially constructing a wall around those systems and only allowing certain types of entry. There is much more controlled entry than there has been in the past.

That system was implemented a couple weeks ago now, and with anything as complex as this, there are always some difficulties and some things that were not foreseen in the original plan. We are currently working through those.

Most of those issues that have been raised with us are relatively easily dealt with. We are down to a very small number of problems that we are still trying to deal with. Many of the concerns that have been raised appear to be related to personal preference in terms of how the system is used, rather than a significant functional problem with the system.

We are confident that over the next few weeks, those bugs will be worked out and we will have a much more secure system in place to protect all of the government's communication and computer systems.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In the area of these protections on government systems, is it then that you can only communicate government to government shop sort of thing, using LAN lines and WAN, or whatever the terminology was. Wide area network was another one, but it was strictly government to government.

For example, if you are in Inuvik, to be available for the system, you had to be within a government department, government building, infrastructure. If you fell outside of that, then you could

not hook up to the system unless you were willing to pay a very high price.

Is that what this is doing in the system? When you say protecting the government's systems, then those communications that would be able to flow back and forth would be strictly government communications?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): The deputy minister, Mr. Rattray.

MR. RATTRAY: Mr. Chairman, there are legitimate reasons for others than government to connect with the government systems. It is what is termed virtual private network connections that can be made. It is essentially a license and a specific route to get into the government systems. We have issued approximately 40 of those at the present time.

Again, because we have good control over the systems, this allows us to understand who is using the system, what they are using it for and make sure they are secure when they are accessing the systems.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Page 5-15, systems and communications, operations expense, total operations expense, \$847,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Page 5-17, petroleum products, operations expense, total operations expense, \$860,000. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In the committee's report, we raised some concerns with the petroleum products revolving fund and how that impacts on planning and so on. We realize as well, when we first went through the draft main estimates, the planned increase for fuel prices in the small communities has been put off. What does that do for the situation around the petroleum products and the delivery of petroleum products?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Minister.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Mr. Chairman, the end result of that decision is going to be that we are going to be about \$700,000 further in debt this year. We increased the deficit of the revolving fund by about \$700,000.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. What does that do to the legislated debt limit for the revolving fund?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Minister.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, that can bring us closer to our limit, but I will ask Mr. Aumond to elaborate on that.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Aumond.

MR. AUMOND: We are projecting a loss this fiscal year of about \$400,000. Next year, as the Minister stated, it is around \$700,000, which would, in all likelihood, challenge the \$5 million limit of the stabilization fund. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As the reason that was stated in not going forward with the increased amount was we were able to purchase fuel and get it delivered to communities at a lower rate, that obviously, by the sounds of it, has not helped the situation. What is causing it? Is it a combination of higher costs at the communities? Fuel prices are still relatively low compared to when one of the big concerns in all departments was that the price seemed to be going through the roof.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Aumond. Excuse me, Mr. Roland, did you have something to add?

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just got cut off right at the end there. Again, the impacts of those decisions and the long-term outlook for petroleum products. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Aumond.

MR. AUMOND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Member is correct. We did receive some better pricing for the winter road resupply. We let it tender in cooperation with the Power Corporation. We were able to get some better prices, not only for the price of the product itself but also on the transportation side.

However, we still have the barge communities to deal with. We are hopeful that the pricing we are getting now will be there this summer. However, we are also selling less fuel now than we did a year ago. It has been a milder winter. All those things considered, if things do not change, we are still projecting to challenge the debt limit of the stabilization fund.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Realizing that is a real potential, during the review of the department's main estimates, the Minister stated that he would be going forward to have some of that written off. Is that the intention, and when would the Minister come forward with information on that?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Minister.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I am planning to come forward with that in April. The plan is that because we reduced the number of communities that are involved in the program, it is only appropriate that portion of the revolving fund that would have been applicable to those communities would be written off by this government, because it is seen as not fair that you apply this cost to the communities that are still in the system, because in fact, they did not generate it. That is the overall plan.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Minister. At this time, I will recognize the clock and rise and report progress. I would like to thank the Minister and his witnesses. Sergeant-at-Arms, would you escort the witnesses out? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The House will come back to order. Item 20, report of committee of the whole. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

ITEM 20: REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Bill 2, Bill 7, Committee Report 2-14(5), and would like to report progress with four

motions being adopted, and that Bill 7 is ready for third reading as amended. Mr. Speaker, I move the report of the committee of the whole be concurred with.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Do we have a seconder for the motion? The honourable Member for Hay River North, Mr. Delorey, seconds the motion. We have a motion on the floor. The motion is in order. All those in favour, please signify. Thank you. All those opposed? Thank you. The motion is carried. Item 21, third reading of bills. Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

ITEM 22: ORDERS OF THE DAY

DEPUTY CLERK (Mr. Schauerte): Mr. Speaker, meetings tomorrow at 9:00 a.m. of the Accountability and Oversight Committee and Cabinet House Strategy.

Orders of the day for Friday, March 8, 2002:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Oral Questions
7. Written Questions
8. Returns to Written Questions
9. Replies to Opening Address
10. Petitions
11. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
12. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
13. Tabling of Documents
14. Notices of Motion
15. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
16. Motions
17. First Reading of Bills
 - Bill 11, An Act to Amend the Liquor Act
18. Second Reading of Bills
 - Bill 9, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 3, 2001-2002
19. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Bill 2, Appropriation Act, 2002-2003
 - Bill 4, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act

- Committee Report 1-14(5), Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight Report on the Review of the 2002-2003 Main Estimates
 - Committee Report 2-14(5), Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development Report on the Review of the 2002-2003 Main Estimates
 - Committee Report 3-14(5), Standing Committee on Social Programs Report on the Review of the 2002-2003 Main Estimates
20. Report of Committee of the Whole
21. Third Reading of Bills
- Bill 7, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly Retiring Allowances Act and the Supplementary Retiring Allowances Act
22. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until Friday, March 8, 2002, at 10:00 a.m.

-- ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 7:38 p.m.

