



# **NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

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## **HANSARD**

**Thursday, March 14, 2002**

Pages 649 – 694

**The Honourable Tony Whitford, Speaker**

# Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

## Members of the Legislative Assembly

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>PRAYER.....</b>	<b>649</b>
<b>MINISTERS' STATEMENTS .....</b>	<b>649</b>
40-14(5): UPDATE ON FUR INDUSTRY INITIATIVES (ANTOINE).....	649
41-14(5): GOOD LUCK TO ARCTIC WINTER GAMES PARTICIPANTS (STEEN) .....	649
<b>MEMBERS' STATEMENTS .....</b>	<b>650</b>
15 <sup>TH</sup> WEDDING ANNIVERSARY (ROLAND) .....	650
NUNAKPUT ARCTIC WINTER GAMES PARTICIPANTS (STEEN).....	650
HIGH COST OF HOUSING IN YELLOWKNIFE (BRADEN).....	651
WELEDEH ARCTIC WINTER GAMES PARTICIPANTS(HANDLEY) .....	651
AMERICAN ATTITUDES REGARDING NORTHERN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (DELOREY) .....	651
APOLOGIES FOR LATE ARRIVAL (MILTENBERGER) .....	652
HAY RIVER SOUTH ARCTIC WINTER GAMES PARTICIPANTS (GROENEWEGEN) .....	652
FRAME LAKE ARCTIC WINTER GAMES PARTICIPANTS (DENT).....	652
LITERACY PROGRAMMING (MCLEOD) .....	652
SUPPORT FOR WILDLIFE HARVESTERS (LAFFERTY) .....	653
FEDERAL COURT RULING ON TAX AND TREATY RIGHTS (NITAH) .....	653
YELLOWKNIFE SOUTH ARCTIC WINTER GAMES PARTICIPANTS (BELL) .....	654
TRAGIC DEATH OF YOUNG MAN (LEE) .....	654
RECOGNITION OF CANADA WORLD YOUTH PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS (ANTOINE).....	655
<b>REVERT TO MINISTERS' STATEMENTS .....</b>	<b>656</b>
42-14(5): ROMANOW COMMISSION ON THE FUTURE OF HEALTH CARE IN CANADA (MILTENBERGER) .....	656
<b>RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY .....</b>	<b>657</b>
<b>ORAL QUESTIONS .....</b>	<b>657</b>
<b>TABLING OF DOCUMENTS .....</b>	<b>665</b>
<b>CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OF BILLS AND OTHER MATTERS .....</b>	<b>665</b>
<b>REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE.....</b>	<b>690</b>
<b>REVERT TO TABLING OF DOCUMENTS .....</b>	<b>690</b>
<b>THIRD READING OF BILLS .....</b>	<b>691</b>
<b>REVERT TO MOTIONS .....</b>	<b>691</b>
<b>ASSENT TO BILLS .....</b>	<b>692</b>
<b>ORDERS OF THE DAY .....</b>	<b>692</b>



**YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**

**Thursday, March 14, 2002**

**Members Present**

Honourable Roger Allen, Honourable Jim Antoine, Mr. Bell, Mr. Braden, Mr. Delorey, Mr. Dent, Mrs. Groenewegen, Honourable Joe Handley, 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, Mr. Lafferty. Please be seated. Good afternoon. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Deputy Premier, Mr. Antoine.

**ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS**

**Minister's Statement 40-14(5): Update on Fur Industry Initiatives**

**HON. JIM ANTOINE:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, during these times of economic expansion it is easy to forget one of our first economic ventures, the fur industry. Trapping is still important for seasonal income in our smaller communities.

Recently there has been some good news for people working in the fur harvesting industry. Fur prices are rising. Prices for wild fur harvested throughout the Northwest Territories are the highest in several years. For example, marten sold at an auction in February for an average of \$85 per pelt, about a 40 percent increase from last year. The average price for Arctic fox pelts was \$26 per pelt, about four dollars more than the previous year. The Government of the Northwest Territories' Fur Marketing Program under the Genuine Mackenzie Valley Fur brand has experienced a banner year in fur sales to date, with virtually all pelts offered being fully sold.

The demand for fur fashions seems to be reviving as well. Arctic Canada Trading Company, a subsidiary of the NWT Development Corporation, has begun marketing and exporting a promising new line of fur garments highlighting Dene designs and Genuine Mackenzie Valley furs. This line was extremely well received at the Team Canada trade mission in Dallas. Initial sales of the line have reached \$60,000, with more sales on the horizon.

This government wants to capitalize on these recent developments. Two recent programs offered jointly by the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development and the NWT Development Corporation are ensuring there is an adequate supply of smoked hides and furs for arts and crafts producers in the Northwest Territories. To date, \$200,000 has been committed to these initiatives. Due to the ongoing demand for these programs, a further \$80,000 is being injected into these programs by the department this fiscal year.

Trapper training is a major element in revitalizing the traditional economy. The department has recently put together a core of certified trapper trainers. A resident trapper trainer is located in each region to ensure trappers are kept current with technology and market demands. I would like to congratulate our six resident trapper trainers on successfully completing training programs with the Fur Institute of Canada. The trainers are

Danny Beaulieu, Wilfred Jackson, John Charlie Junior, Sholto Douglas, Edward Cholo and George Tatsiechele. They are excellent role models for the fur industry in the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, strengthening and increasing the number of trappers is critical to sustaining the industry and to reinforcing the positive social and cultural values attributed to maintaining a healthy productive lifestyle. We will be making significant investments in trapper training during the next year.

The Take a Kid Trapping Program is a new initiative that will promote and provide training in life skills for young people in kindergarten to grade 6. The program is designed to provide students with an introduction to the fur industry and offers them an opportunity for "hands-on" experience outside the classroom. A separate program, geared towards young people in grades 6 to 12 or those outside the school system, will provide opportunities to get involved in the traditional economy. The department is actively seeking out partners for this program. These programs can help to prepare students who may participate in the on-the-land experience programs provided through the Department of Education, Culture and Employment.

We will also be investing \$65,000 towards the purchase of new trapping technology that will meet and/or exceed trapping technology requirements currently imposed on the industry. Through this investment we will make significant strides to guaranteeing the survival of the fur industry for generations to come.

We will also be investing in the establishment of a new trapper training centre in the Sahtu region. The centre will provide traditional life skills and trapper training to people in the region. We will also be making improvements to our current training facility at Bliss Lake in the North Slave region.

Mr. Speaker, I hope these initiatives will help us revitalize this very important part of our economy and history. A strong traditional economy can provide many opportunities and a prosperous future for many residents of the Northwest Territories. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Antoine. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. Steen.

**Minister's Statement 41-14(5): Good Luck to Arctic Winter Games Participants**

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and good afternoon. Mr. Speaker, this weekend NWT athletes will travel to Iqaluit, Nunavut and Nuuk, Greenland, to compete in the

2002 Arctic Winter Games. This year the games will be held from March 17<sup>th</sup> to the 23<sup>rd</sup>. The NWT will be represented by 214 athletes from 19 northern communities. Team NWT will also include several coaches, mission staff, chaperones and 17 cultural delegates.

Team NWT will be joined by teams from Alaska, the Yukon, Northern Alberta, Nunavut, Northern Quebec, Greenland and the Russian provinces of Chukotka and Magadan.

Mr. Speaker, since the first official games in Yellowknife in 1970, the GNWT has been among the strongest supporters of the Arctic Winter Games and the opportunities they provide for the advancement of athletic competition and cultural awareness in the NWT.

The Arctic Winter Games are also an important opportunity for NWT youth to meet and learn about some of our neighbours. The games also play an important role in the development of NWT athletes. Through the games and the trials process, our athletes have the opportunity to experience competition at a higher level.

In addition to the athletes travelling to the games, 1,114 athletes from 23 communities participated in regional trials, and 684 athletes from 21 communities took part in the territorial trials.

This year the games are being co-hosted in two communities, Iqaluit and Nuuk. This is part of an attempt to explore different hosting models. Allowing different communities to co-host the games may allow other smaller communities to play a part in hosting the games in the future.

Also while in Nuuk, Minister Ootes and I have scheduled a meeting with our ministerial counterpart from Greenland to address how the cultural and sporting aspects of the games can be enhanced in years to come.

Mr. Speaker, in light of our commitment to invest in the people of the NWT – particularly the health and well-being of our youth – it is imperative that this government continues to stand behind this exciting and high profile event.

More than ever this year the eyes of Canada, through a variety of national media outlets, will be on our northern athletes. The young men and women that will compete in Iqaluit and Nuuk represent the exciting and competitive future that is in store for our territory.

It will be with pleasure and pride that Commissioner Hansen, Minister Ootes and myself will be meeting our athletes and participating, on behalf of the Government of the Northwest Territories, in the opening ceremonies.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to invite my fellow Members to join me in wishing Team NWT good luck as it travels to the Arctic Winter Games. Thank you.

-- Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Steen. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, Mr. Roland.

### ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

#### Member's Statement on 15<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary

**MR. ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I have made it my tradition to send greetings back home to my wife and children, today I will go a little bit further. Today, Mr. Speaker, is a special day for my wife and I. It was some 15 years ago that I met Shawna and we got together. She decided I was good enough to tie the knot with, so to speak, Mr. Speaker. If it was not for her strength, I do not believe I would be here today.

She has been a strength to me and my children, especially since I spend so much time away from home. She takes up the role as mother and father and supporter for our family back home.

Seeing as I am not home to wish her well myself and say thank you for those years of commitment, and I look forward to many more years of service. I find sometimes I am no longer the man I used to be, because she has moulded me to what I am today and helped with that process.

So I thank her and wish that I would be home today, but I am looking forward to being home on Saturday and sharing with my family our achievement. Thank you.

-- Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** She has probably recorded your statement to play back and forth, again and again. Thank you, Mr. Roland. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Nunakput, Mr. Steen.

#### Member's Statement on Nunakput Arctic Winter Games Participants

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, as well as other Members of the House, have young people taking part in the games and in the activities in both Iqaluit and Nuuk, Greenland. I would like to pass on to them the support of my constituents and urge them to take part, but remind them it is not so important, although it would be nice to bring home the ulus, it is not as important as good sportsmanship and good fellowship at the games.

Mr. Speaker, I have a number of different athletes and participants from different communities. I have seven athletes from Holman: Garry Okheena, Heather Okheena, Joe Kitekudluk, Robbie Inuktalik, Susie Memogana, Victoria Akhlatak and Pam Inutalik from Holman.

From Tuktoyaktuk, I have Craig Gruben, Matthew Anikina, Phillip Jacobson and Steve Cockney, who would be a coach for Inuit games. These athletes are all in the Inuit games, Mr. Speaker.

I have from Sachs Harbour, Preston Carpenter and Jenna Keogak. Jenna is going to be in badminton.

From Paulatuk, I have Johnathon Dillon and Angus Dillon who will be taking part in the Inuit Games. Also from Paulatuk, I have six cultural performers – Nolan Green, Warren Ruben, Esther Wolki, Tracy Wolki, Norman Kudlak and Kirt Ruben, who will be a cultural performer chaperone.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of my constituents in Nunakput, I wish them all well while performing at the Arctic Winter Games at Nuuk and Iqaluit, and good luck, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

-- Applause

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

#### **Member's Statement on High Cost of Housing in Yellowknife**

**MR. BRADEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A couple of days ago in this Assembly, I spoke of the high cost of airfares and the pressure on the cost of living. In the last couple of days, I have had some more news on that front. It is disturbing news, Mr. Speaker, especially for those people in rental accommodations here in Yellowknife.

The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, in its regular survey of the housing market in Yellowknife, is telling us that our vacancy rates in apartments for the coming year is going to be at about half a percent, and most disturbing, Mr. Speaker, is that there will continue to be upward pressure on the cost of renting. They are forecasting somewhere in the neighbourhood of 8 to 10 percent. Mr. Speaker, this is very bad news in the fact of increases that we have already had. For instance, in 1999, the cost of a monthly two-bedroom apartment in Yellowknife was \$986. This year, that is forecasted to be \$1,175. Put yourself in the position, Mr. Speaker, of a low to middle income family facing an increase in the past three years of \$200 a month for rent; and that is on top of energy and utility costs that I think have exceeded 20 percent.

Mr. Speaker, even though in Yellowknife we are fortunate to see the private sector responding with potentially a few hundred new apartment units, we are still in a situation where we are not going to be able to take advantage of the economic good times when people just do not have places to stay. I am going to be asking the Minister responsible just what we can do, especially, Mr. Speaker, to protect the situation of those low and middle income people who do not have anywhere to turn when it comes to the skyrocketing cost of living here in Yellowknife.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Braden. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Handley.

#### **Member's Statement on Weledeh Arctic Winter Games Participants**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize some participants who will be attending the Arctic Winter Games next week. I am pleased to say that from the Weledeh riding, there are 27 athletes participating in nine different sports. First, I would like to congratulate them on being successful in representing the NWT at the games. Second, I wish them the best of luck in the upcoming competitions, good sportsmanship, a trip filled with memories and a few ulus that will be with them the rest of their lives.

Participating in badminton is Luke Coedy; taking part in basketball are Leona Johnston, Julia Pin, John Paeztel, Aaron Plotner; for cross-country skiing, Sarah Stephen; competing in gymnastics is Stacie Bengts; in the sport of ice hockey, Ryan

Arychuk, Nick Ballantyne, Colin Bastarach, Josh Bolstad, Craig Bromley, Joshua Brown, Matt Brown, Elisabeth Laratta, Andrew Mathews, Scott Metcalfe, Lisa Rousseau and Craig Stephen; playing for the NWT in indoor soccer are Cody Erasmus and Jackie Ruptash-Stauffer; for snowboarding, Brendan Matthews; in speed skating, Katharine Corriveau, Pierre Corriveau, Michael Gilday and Jill Gilday; and in volleyball, Graham King.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to mention two members of the mission staff, Ms. Penny Johnson and Ms. Karen Thomson, who will be attending as well.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I would like to give a special thank you and my voice of appreciation to the two coaches participating in these games, who live in my riding: Mr. David Gilday, who coaches speed skating; and Mr. Dave Grundy, who coaches hockey. Without the many volunteer hours of people like these two gentlemen, and the many others out there who contribute many, many hours of their valuable time, games like this would not be possible. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

#### **Member's Statement on American Attitudes Regarding Northern Resource Development**

**MR. DELOREY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in October 2000, I had the opportunity and pleasure of attending meetings in Washington along with Premier Stephen Kakfwi, Minister Joe Handley and Minister Vince Steen. While we were there, Mr. Speaker, we had the opportunity to meet with representatives of the embassy to deal with our relationship between the U.S. and Canada. We also met with pipeline builders. We met with financing groups, producers and government representatives, including some senators, Mr. Speaker.

We were there to spread the word that the Northwest Territories is open for business as far as pipeline development and the desire for us to supply the U.S. market with gas were concerned. I must say, Mr. Speaker, that I was bit disappointed with the reception we received down there. Although they were very polite to us and very attentive to the presentation we made, it seemed at that time that they were marginally interested in our gas.

In February of this year, I was also given another opportunity to accompany the Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, the honourable Jim Antoine, and his deputy minister, Robert McLeod, to further meetings in New York and Washington. I would like to thank the department and the Minister for allowing our committee to be represented at those meetings.

The meetings in New York, Mr. Speaker, were to do with diamonds. I was very encouraged to learn that the diamond industry and people in the States are very interested in our Canadian certified diamond project, and the belief that there is a good future in the diamond industry for Canadian certified diamonds. A little bit on the downside of that, Mr. Speaker, we also learned that maybe the businesses that we have set up in the diamond industry, and how our whole industry is set up,

could use some improvement. Some of the points that were raised indicated we could be doing better as a government.

Also when we went to Washington, Mr. Speaker, I was very surprised, and pleasantly surprised I might add, at the reception we received down there. We met a lot of the people with whom we had previously met and the reception was totally different, Mr. Speaker. We had people supporting our project to the likes of...

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

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

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

**MR. DELOREY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, colleagues, I will cut this short. I was pleasantly surprised at the reception because all of a sudden we had people in the States the likes of Senator Murkowski, who was fully supporting our Mackenzie Valley pipeline. However, it was also brought to our attention how fragile the whole project is and the many issues that have to be dealt with between now and an actual pipeline going down. I would think the department has made a lot of notes from our trip down there and that this government is going to be taking some action on some of the things we heard down there. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

#### **Member's Statement on Apologies for Late Arrival**

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to apologize to yourself and this House for being late. I was at a meeting with a committee of people with disabilities, working on terminology and we got into a discussion on a number of issues. I was delayed and could not leave. I would just like to apologize to this House for not being here at the appropriate time. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** I am sorry, Mr. Miltenberger, that was supposed to be a Member's statement. We are in the Members' statement category here. That is not considered to be a Member's statement. It has to do with your ministerial portfolio, according to your rules.

Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

#### **Member's Statement on Hay River South Arctic Winter Games Participants**

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I as well as many of my colleagues would like to wish good luck to athletes travelling to the Arctic Winter Games from Hay River South. Team NWT certainly represents a broad number of communities, but today I want to particularly mention the athletes from my riding. They are: Amanda Matchett, ice

hockey; Jesse Molenkamp, ice hockey; Rylie Hamilton and Jenna Knight, ice hockey; Michelle Daigneault, snow shoeing; Sean Fisher, ice hockey; Brian Swallow, cross country skiing; Doug Swallow, his dad, is going as mission staff; Brent Hoffman in curling, and his dad going as the curling coach, Gary Hoffman; Brandon Lafferty, ice hockey; Cody Molenkamp, Curtis Rowe, Ty Fraser, ice hockey; mission staff Bill Dewsbury and Mark Harris; Angela Cardinal, volleyball; and Devan King, ice hockey.

Mr. Speaker, I hope it would be allowable, since I am on the subject of outstanding young people from my constituency, if I could also mention the two pages from Hay River South who are serving the Legislature this week. They are Charlyn Branton and Amanda Coleman. They have been doing a super job here and I am very proud to have them here this week. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. I will just remind Members that Members statements should only have one topic. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Mr. Dent.

#### **Member's Statement on Frame Lake Arctic Winter Games Participants**

**MR. DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to join Minister Steen and the other Members who have extended their wishes of good luck to the Arctic Winter Games participants. Participation in sports, as we know, is an important part of a healthy lifestyle. To achieve the level these young folks who have been selected for Team NWT have achieved means they have worked really hard.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish good luck to the indoor soccer team members from my constituency: Lindsay Beck, Anneluzelia Hernandez, Brandon Fabien, Dustin Milligan and Michelle Tuma.

From my constituency going to participate in basketball is Candace Bradbury, Orthan Memedovski and Jason Fietcher. For ice hockey we have Pam Edwards, Brittany Herriot and Brennan Gagnon going. For cross-country skiing, Holly Lennie will be going.

As a cultural performer from my constituency, Robert James Mantla will also be attending the games. Going as coaches and chaperones are Shelly Beck and Bernard Hogan. I would just like to echo Minister Handley's comments that without the efforts of volunteers like Ms. Beck and Mr. Hogan, we could not possibly have games like this.

I hope all of the participants enjoy themselves and achieve at their best level. I hope they are also able to make some new friends and hopefully win a medal or two. Good luck, Team NWT.

-- Applause

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

#### **Member's Statement on Literacy Programming**

**MR. MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, literacy in the Northwest Territories is an issue that merits attention.



Through the Literacy Strategy, this government has committed \$2.4 million per year for the next five years to address the issue of literacy in the Northwest Territories.

The communities outside of the major centres have small populations but the same program requirements of larger centres. There is a requirement for early childhood and family literacy programs, school-aged children and youth, working people, and elders programs.

To deliver a range of programs of varied requirements such as this may require the use of not one but several instructors, a luxury that small communities cannot afford due to limited funding.

Mr. Speaker, it is good to know there is financial commitment to literacy by this government. However, there is more than throwing dollars at an issue as important as this. There has to be a viable long-term plan. The plan must take into consideration infrastructure and social issues in the communities outside of major centres. These issues must address the lack of housing for instructors, a lack of facilities and equipment to effectively host programs and lack of childcare for participants' children.

As you can see, this issue crosses through a number of government departments and I would suggest that these departments actively participate in the implementation of the Literacy Strategy. Mr. Speaker, it is important that the people in the communities take ownership of this programming.

However, in my region, as an example, the Deh Cho process and development activities keep those residents who are qualified to coordinate the delivery of programs very busy. This limits the time they may devote to important matters such as this. I would encourage this government to cooperate with the smaller communities to help them coordinate literacy activities. This cooperation should be in the form of multi-year funding to attract qualified personnel and coordination of activities between communities.

Multi-year funding is important in providing communities the opportunity to assess the requirements and ensure programs are delivered on a consistent and timely basis. Mr. Speaker, I will have questions for the Minister of [Education, Culture and Employment](#) during question period. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

#### **Member's Statement on Support for Wildlife Harvesters**

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My statement today is on the trapping and harvesting of wildlife. Mr. Speaker, we as a government must support the trappers who want to continue trapping. To do this, we must increase the harvesters fund that we allocate to the communities.

Mr. Speaker, in the last year, we have seen an increase in trappers going out on the land and bringing back fur for marketing. We also see fur prices rising in southern markets. Mr. Speaker, we are putting more money into training and arts and crafts, but there is no mention of funding for communities that may have an increase in trappers going out on the land.

Mr. Speaker, we must recognize the trappers who kept trapping even when the prices were down. This was a way of life for them and they continue to live that way of life. Mr. Speaker, I will have questions on this matter later in this session today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### **Member's Statement on Federal Court Ruling on Tax and Treaty Rights**

**MR. NITAH:** Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in his decision, Justice Campbell concluded, and I quote:

I find that the treaty term must be interpreted to provide to aboriginal people who are entitled to the benefits of Treaty 8 a treaty right not to have any tax imposed upon them at any time for any reason.

Mr. Speaker, that was the decision last Thursday.

As the House is aware, I represent the riding that is in the Akaitcho Treaty 8 area. Many people have questions about the relevancy of this court ruling to their own rights. There are questions coming from Treaty 8 citizens who are currently employed by the Government of the Northwest Territories. We need to bring some information to them and to the Akaitcho people as well, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to give a brief background on the issues as understood by the Akaitcho people. The Akaitcho First Nations became a party to a peace and friendship treaty with the Crown on July 25, 1900, at Deninu K'ue. The Crown considered that treaty to be a continuation to the making of Treaty 8, begun in 1899.

For the Akaitcho, the treaty is not a land surrender treaty but rather a stand-alone treaty consisting of the agreements and assurances made on July 25, 1900. The federal court in the Benoit decision said that the honour of the Crown required that Treaty 8 be interpreted as including a full treaty right not to be taxed, since this was believed by the First Nations parties to Treaty 8 at the time of the treaty.

The Akaitcho First Nations have the same general conviction that a treaty term of the 1900 treaty is the right not to be taxed at any time without explicit consent. Whether this right arises by virtue of the explicit promise made in 1900 or whether this right is recognized through the principle of the honour of the Crown, all Akaitcho citizens have their treaty right not to be taxed unless they consent.

The Akaitcho First Nations are currently in treaty implementation negotiations that include, among many other subject matters, Mr. Speaker, issues of taxation. The Akaitcho have stated on a number of occasions that they prefer a negotiated agreement on issues of taxation. At the same time, the federal court has affirmed our treaty right to be free of all forms of taxation and I, along with the Akaitcho chiefs, encourage our citizens to take advantage of this recognized...

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

**MR. NITAH:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. 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. Nitah.

**MR. NITAH:** Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there are political accords signed by the GNWT and the Akaitcho chiefs to recognize that there are treaty issues which might arise in the course of the negotiations. Our government has undertaken to support the Akaitcho in these discussions on their treaty rights.

Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, one of the sad aspects of the Benoit decision has been a lot of negative language in the press and in the public regarding the treaty right to be free from taxation. The language has been fuelling negative comments that are hurtful. It would be prudent on the part of the Government of the Northwest Territories to undertake to implement a number of initiatives to mitigate this negative stereotyping of treaty rights.

Mr. Speaker, these negative words go far into the bureaucracy of the Government of Canada. Supreme Court Justice Beverly McLaughlin recently stated to a Canadian Club presentation that the First Nations people in Canada are conquered people. That is not the case and the Benoit decision reaffirms that particular assertion by First Nations that these treaties are peace and friendship treaties.

Mr. Speaker, I think our government could help mitigate some of these problems by developing curriculum that should be viewed with the objective of including materials related to the treaty making process in Canada and more importantly, in the Northwest Territories. All people have treaty rights within the Territory that are members of First Nations. It is by virtue of the treaty that people can live and share the resources of the Territory. These concepts of co-existence should be included in the curriculum. Any review should include the Dene people so that the product is an accurate reflection of their history and view of the treaty and history of the North.

As Judge Campbell has written that the oral testimony is an important component in this analysis of the materials placed before him, there needs to be an understanding and support for this work, Mr. Speaker, in our educational institutions. I will ask some questions of the appropriate Minister to try and clarify and ascertain the position of this government on the Benoit decision at the appropriate time. Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Mahsi, Mr. Nitah. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Yellowknife South, Mr. Bell.

#### **Member's Statement on Yellowknife South Arctic Winter Games Participants**

**MR. BELL:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In keeping with the mini theme day that seems to be building, I would like to congratulate my constituents who are going to the Arctic Winter Games in Iqaluit and Nuuk. I would have loved to have been able to attend and cheer them on but I will be cheering from here, Mr. Speaker. There are 38 constituents from Yellowknife

South that I have to recognize who are going to proudly represent Team NWT as coaches, athletes and officials.

Before I get to naming them, I would just like to say that in hearing Minister's Steen statement today, he mentioned the fact that they would be meeting with their ministerial counterparts from Greenland to discuss culture. I think that is a very important aspect of these games. I know that in the two games I participated in, Mr. Speaker, that was much of the value that I came away with.

The constituents I have to recognize are: Gail Nesbit, Bill Othmer, Brie-Anne Jefferson, Trevor Moss, William Chapple, Colton Sangris, Carlos Gonzalez, Linda Dunbar, Thomsen D'Hont, Megan Bowden, Shauna Burry, Graeme Chan, Kristan Fairbairn, Kenny Mann, Gord Monteath, Julie Monteath, Christopher Wong, Antonio Babic, Christopher Kelln, Robert Borden, Mackenzie Bentley-Little, Hailey Grayston, Nicole Hamm, Jody Doherty, Jeff Fraser, Andrew Hunter, Alex Chapple, Matt Green, Corey Taylor, Danielle Ellis, Brian Hunter, Robert Latremouille, Mathew Walker, Michele Bourgois, Tobi Taylor, Allister McCreadie, Sarolta Wouters and Russel Becker.

I would notice that Matthew Walker is going for snowboarding, Mr. Speaker, certainly an event that was not around in my time, but it is nice to see that we are keeping up with the times.

Congratulations to all my constituents who are going and are attending, and I will be cheering them on from here. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

#### **Member's Statement on Tragic Death of Young Man**

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as we wind down this session, I would rather end it on a happy note, but I am afraid I have to speak to something much more sad. It has to do with the alcohol and drug problems of our people and how we are not doing enough to help them.

Mr. Speaker, late last night, along with all other Members of this House, I received a fax in my mailbox. The impact of the contents of this letter just began to sink in for me this morning. I have contacted the originator of this letter, Sandra Elliott, and she asked me that I share this with everyone here. I am sure that it is in the interests of the Minister and all Members to hear this story.

Mr. Speaker, the whole letter is too long to read and I will be tabling it later, but to set the stage, Ms. Elliott owns a company called Fibreglass North. She has hired people from the Yellowknife jail over many, many years. It appears that one of her employees has gone missing and is presumed dead and she is not able to find any information about this person. I will start with the section of the letter where it says,

A common sense fund should be set up by this government, the sooner and better. Although development is tremendous for the NWT, it costs money developing oil, gas and minerals, but we must use more money to get rid of the drug and alcohol

problem. It will not go away without money being used to rid the problem. The government will be well paid when they sober NWT people up so that they can get a good education and think for themselves. As long as they are using drugs and alcohol, they will never get their life together.

Every day I go to the Yellowknife Post Office, I could cry to see the wrecked lives sleeping on the Post Office floor. We need more shelters for the homeless, not jails. Yellowknife is a very high problem area. I recently am aware of four suicides this year, all young people on drugs. The most recent two last Thursday; James Mungialuk, born February 19, 1966, one of our employees, was one of these. We were out of town when this happened. We have heard several stories that he was found frozen to death out in the bush near Boundary Creek.

Also, a truck driver from RTL found him on a highway out of Yellowknife with his head shot off...

**MR. SPEAKER:** Ms. Lee, your time for Member's statement has ended. Ms. Lee.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to just finish my statement. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you. The honourable Member is seeking unanimous consent to conclude her statement. Are there any nays? There are no nays. You may conclude, Ms. Lee.

**MS. LEE:** He was found dead, Mr. Speaker.

I talked to people from Fort Rae and they say the highway is scary between Yellowknife and Rae. There is a drug dealer living out on the highway by Boundary Creek. Apparently, they see young and old people walking on the highway to the dealer, who lives on the highway. James had no gun, nor did he have any money. If it was suicide, where did he get the gun? The last time we saw him alive was here at our home in Kam Lake, Sunday, March 10<sup>th</sup>.

I have called the RCMP in Yellowknife and the Yellowknife jail for information on his family or where to locate them. They still have not given us any information. Do you know him? He also goes by John Oliver. I have driven down to the valley to the Vital Abel House to visit people who are staying there.

We first hired James from the Yellowknife jail back in 1994. He has been in and out of jail because of drinking and fighting. James was a unique and very intelligent

man. He could do the work of three men. We needed his enthusiasm and told him so. He worked off and on for us. We found him last October down and out at the Yellowknife Post Office, brought him out to the factory and put him to work. He was an alcoholic. He was homeless, so he was living with us.

Living on the edge, homeless in 40-below weather, broke, is not a pretty picture. What can this government do? Is anyone aware of James Mungialuk, John Oliver, of relatives that we can contact?

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### **Member's Statement on Recognition of Canada World Youth Program Participants**

**HON. JIM ANTOINE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it may appear that both Sri Lanka, a tropical agricultural island in the Indian Ocean near India, and Uruguay in South America are furthest from our minds as we sit here today. However, for two of my constituents, these countries are not too distant at all. I would like to recognize two young men, because for Derek Erasmus and Felix Isiah of Fort Simpson, the six months they spent abroad as exchange participants in the Canada World Youth program has had a great effect in their lives.

For Derek Erasmus, his months in Sri Lanka was a very different experience for him and one that he probably thought he would never encounter. As a Northerner and Canadian, we can only appreciate what democracy means for us. Derek was exposed to men carrying assault type rifles and people he could not communicate with. He was in a totally different way of life on the other side of the world where the daily lives involve militant rebels, soldiers and armoured vehicles. All through this, Derek spent time with a host family, where he spent days working with the family, and he spent his time teaching English in a school run by the government.

As for Felix Isiah, he spent time in the agricultural exchange program in Uruguay in South America, where he learned some Spanish and worked on a farm where he learned to work with very basic machinery and tools.

Both these young men have come back to Fort Simpson after this experience and both have learned to accept these different cultures in different countries, and a different way of life. They view the world differently now from their experience. I would like to welcome them home to Fort Simpson and to Canada. I am sure that this program is a very good program. It is a non-government organization that was established in 1971, and the young people who apply to this...

**MR. SPEAKER:** Mr. Antoine, the time for your Member's statement is over. Mr. Antoine.

**HON. JIM ANTOINE:** 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, Mr. Antoine.

**HON. JIM ANTOINE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is an excellent program for young people. We here in the Northwest Territories value our young people. This is a good program for our young people. I am sure some have travelled on this program before. I would like to encourage northern young people who want to have an experience of this nature to get involved in this program. It is a good learning experience. The young people today have a lot of opportunities and this is one of them. Once again, I would like to welcome these young men back home to Fort Simpson. Mahsi.

-- Applause

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

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I request unanimous consent to return to item 2, Ministers' statements.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you. The honourable Member is seeking unanimous consent to return to item 2, Ministers' statements. Are there any nays? There are no nays. The honourable Minister responsible for Health and Social Services, Mr. Miltenberger, your Minister's statement.

## REVERT TO ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS

### Minister's Statement 42-14(5): Romanow Commission on the Future of Health Care in Canada

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I would like to thank my colleagues. Mr. Speaker, earlier this session I spoke about the steps we are taking through the Health and Social Services Action Plan 2002-2005 to ensure sustainability of the health and social services system in the NWT.

The issues we face are not unique. Concerns regarding the sustainability of Canada's health system led to the creation of the Romanow Commission by the Prime Minister in April 2001. The commission has been mandated to develop recommendations that will help ensure long-term sustainability of a high quality, universally accessible, publicly administered health care system for all Canadians.

The NWT supports the work of the commission. We concur with Mr. Romanow's statement that Medicare needs to be remodelled and not demolished, and we agree that long term sustainability of the health care system must remain a priority. This being said, we also believe that funding levels from the Government of Canada have not kept up with the changes in the health care system here and across the country.

The work of the commission is comprised of two stages; a fact-finding stage, resulting in an interim report, and a dialogue with the Canadian public and interested stakeholders based on the interim report. Mr. Romanow's interim report issued in early February indicated that he plans to consult Canadians about four key themes. These are:

- Canadian values and how they are and should be reflected in the Canada Health Act;
- sustainability and funding;
- quality and access; and
- leadership, collaboration and responsibility.

Mr. Speaker, the issues raised in the commission's interim report are important to Northerners. We agree with a number of the report's observations. In particular, we support the concept that the Canada Health Act must reflect the values of all Canadians, including those living in the North, and that more must be done to meet the unique needs of aboriginal Canadians.

The commission's consultation process includes 18 days of open public hearings in major urban centres across Canada. Mr. Romanow has written to us and indicated that he has scheduled a consultation in Yellowknife on May 16, 2002. The Premier and I will be appearing before the commission to speak on the challenges and opportunities in the NWT and the health issues unique to the people of the North. We will outline for the commission our action plan and the reforms we have initiated. We will also outline our government's continuing commitment to providing high quality health services to Northerners regardless of where they live.

In recognition of our consensus style of government, the Standing Committee on Social Programs will also be provided with an opportunity to appear at the commission hearing.

As there are unique health care issues facing the North and aboriginal people, we will also be recommending to the commission to take the opportunity while in the NWT to visit and experience first-hand a small northern community.

As our colleague, the MLA for Yellowknife South indicated in a Member's statement on this topic last week, all Northerners with an interest in our health care system are urged to get involved in this process.

While we support the work of the commission, the NWT, like other provinces and territories, must continue to move forward in reforming its health and social services system. The Health and Social Services System Action Plan 2002-2005 builds on the recommendations of reports and studies done on the NWT health and social services system over the past eight years and the advice of NWT leaders, residents and health care professionals. Through this plan, it is our intention to make the long-term sustainability of our system a reality. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Minister. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Item 4, reports of standing and special committees. The honourable Member for Yellowknife South, Mr. Bell.

**MR. BELL:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My mistake, at a later time, I will have a document to table. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you. Item 4, reports of standing and special committees. Item 5, returns to oral questions. Item 6, recognition of visitors in the gallery.

**ITEM 6: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY**

**MR. SPEAKER:** Colleagues, I would like to take this opportunity of recognizing someone special to me in the gallery, Mrs. Whitford, front row.

-- Applause

Thank you. Item 6, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Hay River North, Mr. Delorey.

**MR. DELOREY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize a couple of residents from Hay River in the gallery. Mr. and Mrs. Coleman are here, witnessing their daughter in the Legislature. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you. Item 6, recognition of visitors in the gallery. I would like to welcome everyone who is here to see the Legislative Assembly. Item 7, oral questions. The honourable Member for Deh Cho, Mr. McLeod.

**ITEM 7: ORAL QUESTIONS****Question 215-14(5): Funding for Community Literacy Programs**

**MR. MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today is for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. I am glad to see this government has made a financial commitment to literacy over the next five years. However, it is not clear to myself and to my constituents how the money will be filtered down into our communities. We have a lot of concerns about the lack of facilities, structures and equipment. I want to ask the Minister if he could tell me how the money will be distributed under this strategy. Is it on a per capita basis, on a first-come, first-served basis, or some other method? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

**Return to Question 215-14(5): Funding for Community Literacy Programs**

**HON. JAKE OOTES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is our intention to ensure that literacy programs are delivered in every community in the Northwest Territories as a start. The process of that will be working hand-in-hand with the community groups, as well as the college. The college has been funded \$700,000 to ensure we get into every community in the Territory. We will be working with the college, with the community organizations. In some cases, the organizations are already established. For instance, in Fort Providence, we already have delivered some literacy programs over the past year.

What we need to do is ensure we get a good handle, Mr. Speaker, on the resources available in the communities, the locations, the resource people. We are doing a survey. It is actually being done through the Language Strategy and the Early Childhood Development Plan, but it can apply to the Literacy Strategy as well, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary to Question 215-14(5): Funding for Community Literacy Programs**

**MR. MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is good to hear the Minister and his department have committed to going to all communities. I am assuming that will include the smaller communities, such as Kakisa and Enterprise in my riding. I wanted the Minister to confirm if his department is planning to assist the communities in defining the implementation of a multi-year literacy program. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

**Further Return to Question 215-14(5): Funding for Community Literacy Programs**

**HON. JAKE OOTES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It would be our intent to continue the programming on an ongoing basis, as long as this House provides the funding for us, Mr. Speaker.

We have an established literacy delivery program, but it is not delivered now in all communities. I believe it is in some 16 or 14 communities. I am being hypothetical with the figure. As I said, we want to ensure that goes to all of the communities in the Territories, Mr. Speaker.

With regard to funding for non-government organizations, it has been a challenge for us. We want to work on multi-year funding. That has been an issue with many organizations out there. I understand through one of our other colleagues that we are looking at that possibility, Mr. Speaker. It has some challenges because we cannot commit beyond our own term, at the moment, with some of the programs. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary to Question 215-14(5): Funding for Community Literacy Programs**

**MR. MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With the recent surge in resource development, it has certainly been demonstrated and voiced in this House that there is a need for qualified people in the different industry sectors. I would like to ask the Minister, can we expect to see workplace literacy projects in our communities? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

**Further Return to Question 215-14(5): Funding for Community Literacy Programs**

**HON. JAKE OOTES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Part of the program is to deliver basic adult education and literacy. There is basic literacy 110, hypothetically, and goes up to 160. Additional to that, we have a Workplace Literacy Program to provide organizations with the ability to assist their employees to upgrade themselves. That is being handled through various organizations, Mr. Speaker.

We have a steering committee, which is an advisory committee to the Minister. Under that steering committee, we have working groups for all of the literacy thrusts, so at the end of the year, that steering committee comes back to the Minister with a report and recommendations on how effective this program has been, how we are spending our money and where improvements can be made. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary to Question 215-14(5): Funding for Community Literacy Programs**

**MR. MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Instruction in the workplace is one of the best methods for retention of what is learned. I would like to ask the Minister, can he tell me how much money has been identified for workplace literacy in the Literacy Strategy? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

**Further Return to Question 215-14(5): Funding for Community Literacy Programs**

**HON. JAKE OOTES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I will just double check, but it is \$400,000 that is the amount of money that has been identified for workplace literacy. That is part of the overall budget, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

**Question 216-14(5): Relocating the Energy Secretariat**

**MR. DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Deputy Premier. Last fall when we were talking about hydro initiatives and energy initiatives, the Premier committed to examining whether or not energy initiatives would be consolidated under the auspices of one Minister. That same commitment was made earlier when we were looking at the budget. The commitment specifically then was to respond by the end of this session as to what was happening.

Mr. Speaker, I would just like to ask the Deputy Premier if we are in fact going to have a response, or if he has a response today, because we may be ending as early as today. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Dent. The honourable Deputy Premier, Mr. Antoine.

**Return to Question 216-14(5): Relocating the Energy Secretariat**

**HON. JIM ANTOINE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have to apologize to the Member in the House. Commitments were made that we will have a response to the House by the end of the session and we do not have a response. There are discussions out there among the Cabinet Members on where to go. We never had time to sit down and really go through the ideas that are floating out there at this point. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Deputy Premier. Supplementary, Mr. Dent.

**Supplementary to Question 216-14(5): Relocating the Energy Secretariat**

**MR. DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I personally think it is quite important that we get this organized and have some consolidation of these initiatives. I would like to ask the Deputy Premier, what now is the time line if we did not meet the last one we set?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Dent. The honourable Deputy Premier, Mr. Antoine.

**Further Return to Question 216-14(5): Relocating the Energy Secretariat**

**HON. JIM ANTOINE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We are having some Cabinet meetings in the near future. I think the next one is on the 27<sup>th</sup>. I do not know what is on the agenda there. Perhaps it could be an item for discussion at that time, but I cannot tell you at this time. I do not set the agenda. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Deputy Premier. Supplementary, Mr. Dent.

**Supplementary to Question 216-14(5): Relocating the Energy Secretariat**

**MR. DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, can I get a commitment from the Deputy Premier that he will ensure that this item comes up for discussion and is put on the agenda at that next meeting so we can move this process along?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Dent. The honourable Deputy Premier, Mr. Antoine.

**Further Return to Question 216-14(5): Relocating the Energy Secretariat**

**HON. JIM ANTOINE:** Thank you. I will make that suggestion to have it on the agenda. I think we need to discuss this item and move on. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Deputy Premier. Final supplementary, Mr. Dent.

**Supplementary to Question 216-14(5): Relocating the Energy Secretariat**

**MR. DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would also like to ask the Deputy Premier for a commitment that the committees be kept in the loop as this process is discussed. Committees have set meetings up for April and May and are available to meet with a representative from Cabinet. Will the Cabinet keep the committees informed as the discussions take place?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Dent. The honourable Deputy Premier, Mr. Antoine.

**Further Return to Question 216-14(5): Relocating the Energy Secretariat**

**HON. JIM ANTOINE:** Yes, I will keep the committees informed. Thank you.

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

**Question 217-14(5): Shortage of Apartments in Yellowknife**

**MR. BRADEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation. Can the Minister advise what activity the Housing Corporation is undertaking to address the chronic shortage of apartments in Yellowknife? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Braden. The honourable Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation, Mr. Allen.

**Return to Question 217-14(5): Shortage of Apartments in Yellowknife**

**HON. ROGER ALLEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to advise the Member, now that we have our budget approved for the 2002-2003 fiscal year, we are having a number of new initiatives, one of which is to expand our existing Home Ownership Assistance Program and also introduce some new pilot projects under the Affordable Housing Rental Program, and also to take a very close look at some new seniors projects as well.

We are looking at discussing with a number of private market developers, as well as municipal and community leaders, and I am hoping the Members will also participate in this, to look at varied solutions to our ongoing housing problems throughout the Territories and specifically in Yellowknife, in this case. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Supplementary to Question 217-14(5): Shortage of Apartments in Yellowknife**

**MR. BRADEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, does the Minister have any information or forecast as to when we will see any relief in the chronic vacancy problem here in Yellowknife? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Braden. The honourable Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation, Mr. Allen.

**Further Return to Question 217-14(5): Shortage of Apartments in Yellowknife**

**HON. ROGER ALLEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was hoping I would have the statistical data here prior to this question. My understanding is there are several new developments taking place in the private sector and also from the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation. Under the social program, we are looking at funding a number of new initiatives to alleviate the housing shortage in the city. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Allen. Supplementary, Mr. Braden.

**Supplementary to Question 217-14(5): Shortage of Apartments in Yellowknife**

**MR. BRADEN:** Mr. Speaker, thank you. The news that is disturbing is the historic trend. It looks like it is going to continue to grow. The lower- and middle-income people trying to make a go of it are under increasing stress to meet these

demands. Would the Minister undertake an evaluation of the impact of the rising cost of living on residents of Yellowknife and what this government can do about it? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Braden. The honourable Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation, Mr. Allen.

**Further Return to Question 217-14(5): Shortage of Apartments in Yellowknife**

**HON. ROGER ALLEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, that is an ongoing task that the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation is monitoring very closely. We understand some of the problems. We are also more inclined to find the solutions.

One of the methods is to track private market occupancy rates to ensure that all data is visible and available to developers and some of our industry partners. We also want to identify further pools of risk capital for those developers, so that we can work with one another to find a way to alleviate the specific problems. Thank you.

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

**Question 218-14(5): Treaty 8 Federal Court Ruling on Taxation**

**MR. NITAH:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in light of the monumental federal decision, and it is a federal decision, on the Benoit case regarding Treaty 8, I would like to ask this question to the Deputy Premier.

Mr. Speaker, a number of Treaty 8 people work for the GNWT. Mr. Speaker, I would like to ascertain the official position of the GNWT by asking, will this government uphold the decision in regard to tax remission decisions by the federal court of Canada? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Nitah. The honourable Deputy Premier, Mr. Antoine.

**Return to Question 218-14(5): Treaty 8 Federal Court Ruling on Taxation**

**HON. JIM ANTOINE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this court case has been handed down on the 8<sup>th</sup> of this month. It is a lengthy and complex one. We have a committee of deputy ministers who are reviewing it. At this point in time, if the decision is applicable to the GNWT, then of course we will uphold that decision. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Deputy Premier. Supplementary, Mr. Nitah.

**Supplementary to Question 218-14(5): Treaty 8 Federal Court Ruling on Taxation**

**MR. NITAH:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My next question was if the GNWT has considered their position, but apparently, they are in the process of consideration. I would like to ask, when can the people of the Northwest Territories expect an official position from this government? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Nitah. The honourable Deputy Premier, Mr. Antoine.

**Further Return to Question 218-14(5): Treaty 8 Federal Court Ruling on Taxation**

**HON. JIM ANTOINE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this court case, the Benoit case, was with the federal courts. The federal judge had ruled that there are no taxes imposed on members of Treaty 8. There are a number of different plaintiffs mentioned against the Government of Canada. I think the Government of Canada has until the 8<sup>th</sup> of April to consider whether they are going to appeal. At this point in time, it is not known what the federal government is going to do. Indications are that they are going to appeal, and that kicks it into another legal process.

At this point in time, we are assessing what is going on and looking at, if the Treaty 8 people in the Northwest Territories are also covered under this case, what that means to us in the Northwest Territories as the Government of the Northwest Territories. We have not determined that yet. We are still assessing the whole case and the legal proceedings that went, and the decision made by the judge. Thank you,

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Deputy Premier. Supplementary, Mr. Nitah.

**Supplementary to Question 218-14(5): Treaty 8 Federal Court Ruling on Taxation**

**MR. NITAH:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am kind of concerned that the Minister is wondering if this applies to the GNWT, since this is a federal court decision and in the decision, it refers to all tax. Let us stick to the federal income tax. Has the government developed a position respecting the tax remission issue for their staff? Are they communicating with staff who are Treaty 8 and who are inquiring about this? What is their position with that? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Nitah. The honourable Deputy Premier, Mr. Antoine.

**Further Return to Question 218-14(5): Treaty 8 Federal Court Ruling on Taxation**

**HON. JIM ANTOINE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, at this point in time, we do not know what the implication is to the GNWT. We are still looking at the decision, the different plaintiffs that were named in it and how it is going to be applicable to the Northwest Territories. The court ruling is saying that as of the date of the ruling, the decision is in place. That is still something we have to consider. We are not communicating anything to members of Treaty 8 who are GNWT employees at this point in time. We will keep note of what is going on in terms of taxation from that point on, but at this point in time, we are not communicating anything because we have not determined exactly what it means to us.

There is still an opportunity for the federal government to apply for a stay, meaning the ruling is going to be applicable. They also have the opportunity, until April 8<sup>th</sup>, to appeal this decision. There is still some leeway here.

In the meantime, as I said, there is a committee of deputy ministers looking at this case and trying to determine what it means. We have communicated with our counterparts in Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and British Columbia to see what they are going to do and what it means to them. It is a

complicated and lengthy kind of process that we are undertaking at this point. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Deputy Premier. Final supplementary, Mr. Nitah.

**Supplementary to Question 218-14(5): Treaty 8 Federal Court Ruling on Taxation**

**MR. NITAH:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I understand the federal government will more than likely appeal the decision. However, Mr. Speaker, as of last Thursday this is law and it is a federal decision, so it has national implications including Treaty 8 in the Northwest Territories. If there is a stay, then the decision is suspended until the appeal process is done, but without having that knowledge, I think we have to react to this law right now, if only in a small way by communicating to Treaty 8 staff of the GNWT that we are waiting because they are wondering.

I would like to ask the Minister, if there is an appeal from the government does this government have any plans of intervening in either support of the decision or against the decision? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Nitah. The honourable Deputy Premier, Mr. Antoine.

**Further Return to Question 218-14(5): Treaty 8 Federal Court Ruling on Taxation**

**HON. JIM ANTOINE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we were not involved in the Benoit case, the original case. At this point in time, we are not anticipating to intervene if there is an appeal. Thank you.

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

**Question 219-14(5): Location of Energy and Hydro Secretariat**

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are in follow up to Mr. Dent's and they are directed to the Deputy Premier. Mr. Dent asked about a response on the combination of the Energy Secretariat and the hydro activities that are going on in this government. The hydro is in the Executive and the Energy Secretariat is the responsibility of a different Minister.

One of the things I had asked is if these two functions are combined at the same time, could we look at whether or not this function could be done outside Yellowknife? It is a small unit within the government. Earlier on in this session, I made a statement about the fair distribution of government resources. I want to know if you could also add to that agenda, when you discuss the consolidation, could you discuss where this new unit would be located? Will Hay River be considered? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen, two questions there. The honourable Deputy Premier, Mr. Antoine.



**Return to Question 219-14(5): Location of Energy and Hydro Secretariat**

**HON. JIM ANTOINE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We will look at it. There are other places as well in the North that should be looked at. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Deputy Premier. Supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

**Supplementary to Question 219-14(5): Location of Energy and Hydro Secretariat**

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I assume from that answer that they will consider locating that in Hay River. I would also like to ask the Deputy Premier, has this government, has this Cabinet, recently sat down? We are hearing in this House about the housing crisis and the shortage in Yellowknife, the terrible cost of living...has this Cabinet sat down lately and looked at an inventory of things that you might consider devolving or decentralizing to some of the other communities where there is no housing shortage? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The honourable Deputy Premier, Mr. Antoine.

**Further Return to Question 219-14(5): Location of Energy and Hydro Secretariat**

**HON. JIM ANTOINE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Cabinet does get together and strategize. We were planning on a series of meetings here in the next couple of months, so we could reassess all the different issues and ideas that are floating out there. This will probably be one of them. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Deputy Premier. Supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

**Supplementary to Question 219-14(5): Location of Energy and Hydro Secretariat**

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When Cabinet has come up with a list of activities, programs, units, departments, things that could possibly be decentralized, could they share that with the Members on this side of the House please? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The honourable Deputy Premier, Mr. Antoine.

**Further Return to Question 219-14(5): Location of Energy and Hydro Secretariat**

**HON. JIM ANTOINE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, when we talk about it and if we decide, then we will share all the information with the Members. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Deputy Premier. Your final supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

**Supplementary to Question 219-14(5): Location of Energy and Hydro Secretariat**

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As a matter of fact, I think Members on this side of the House who represent communities other than Yellowknife would like an opportunity to have input into that, so perhaps we will also

compile a list and share that with you, so you will have it available for your deliberations and you can respond to what we might suggest could be moved out of Yellowknife. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The honourable Deputy Premier, Mr. Antoine.

**Further Return to Question 219-14(5): Location of Energy and Hydro Secretariat**

**HON. JIM ANTOINE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as a Member of Cabinet, I always like to work with everybody and get ideas. However, there are a lot of good ideas outside of Cabinet as well, and if you can share that kind of information, we will certainly work with you. Thank you.

-- Applause

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

**Question 220-14(5): Authenticating Northwest Territories Diamonds**

**MR. DELOREY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister responsible for Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, and it has to do with our trip to New York and Washington. Mr. Speaker, one of the things that we heard down there was the positive reception to certified Canadian diamonds and how that project is being received in the diamond industry. One of the things that was brought to light there was the fact that just because we attach a certificate to these diamonds, it is going to take a while to be able to develop a market and attract customers that are willing to pay maybe the extra value for these diamonds. It was put to us that this could be a very expensive process and time consuming. Could the Minister update us on whether he has informed our diamond industry here in the NWT to that aspect and what is being done about it right now? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Return to Question 220-14(5): Authenticating Northwest Territories Diamonds**

**HON. JIM ANTOINE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yes, the three diamond manufacturers up here in the North are very aware of the circumstances. We are new and we are a fledging industry here. We just started about three years ago and there are a lot of growing problems that we have. As we go along, we realize what needs to get done. The information we received from the diamond dealers in New York was very timely. In fact, some of the people who are in the diamond industry from New York are also working with our diamond manufacturers up here.

The different concerns are there. We have related to the manufacturers and our diamond section in RWED is working very closely with the manufacturers to continue developing our certificate program. It is a very popular and positive one, and there is a very good future for our certificate program. It is unique and it is different from other countries that are producing diamonds. People are looking for pure natural

diamonds from the Arctic, from the North, and through our certificate program, it is a good way to market.

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

**Supplementary to Question 220-14(5): Authenticating Northwest Territories Diamonds**

**MR. DELOREY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as the Minister has stated, there is a demand and a market out there for pure Canadian diamonds. One of the contracts that was signed was Ben Sofer Diamonds, I think, with Arslanian to sell their diamonds. One of the things that was stated was that in order to create a market and find a good customer base, it may take some time and a good sales pitch, and it will take some money. It will be expensive for the manufacturers, for governments and for themselves, the marketers. I was wondering if the Minister can tell me if there is any Government of the Northwest Territories money going into a marketing program for these diamonds right now?

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

**Further Return to Question 220-14(5): Authenticating Northwest Territories Diamonds**

**HON. JIM ANTOINE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, with our diamond section of RWED, we are working very closely with the manufacturers. We are working on developing a marketing plan with the manufacturers. There are some initiatives in the works. We do provide funding for this as well. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary to Question 220-14(5): Authenticating Northwest Territories Diamonds**

**MR. DELOREY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am glad to hear that we are doing everything we can to market and get this industry going. With regard to our trip to Washington and the oil and gas sector, Mr. Speaker, one of the things we heard from the producer groups when we met with them was, of course, the ongoing issue of our regulatory process here and how important it is for us as a government to work with the federal government and all the different boards to try and streamline our regulatory process and bring it down from what they see as maybe a four-year period closer to two years. I was wondering if the Minister could update us as to what is happening in that area. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Further Return to Question 220-14(5): Authenticating Northwest Territories Diamonds**

**HON. JIM ANTOINE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the regulatory processes are through the federal legislation and there are a number of different agencies under a number of different federal government departments that are out there that have their own processes. The cooperative approach

started last spring was to try to get all these different regulatory agencies to find a way to work together so they have a smoother, streamlined approach on how to do the environmental assessments and all the work that has to get done for a pipeline. This work is ongoing. They are still negotiating with each other on how to proceed. At the end of the day, the federal Ministers responsible will have to agree on the process.

At this point in time, the information I have is that the work is ongoing and there are cooperative meetings going on and they are just finalizing on how they are going to proceed. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Minister. I would just like to remind Members that questions should stick to one topic. Although we are talking about the same trip, we are talking about two topics here, so I caution the Member. Final supplementary, Mr. Delorey.

**Supplementary to Question 220-14(5): Authenticating Northwest Territories Diamonds**

**MR. DELOREY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just one further question on that. With the pipeline, it is obvious that our government has been out there for at least three years now, that I know of, anyway, saying we are ready for a pipeline, we are promoting a pipeline and we are open for business.

I have a concern when the Minister says we are playing a supportive role but it is up to the producers and the Aboriginal Pipeline Group to move this initiative forward.

I am hoping the Minister could give us some assurances that this government is making sure this project continues to go ahead, and if something comes along that is going to kill this project, that we would not be playing a supportive role in that area as well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Delorey. On the subject of regulations, the Deputy Premier, Mr. Antoine.

**Further Return to Question 220-14(5): Authenticating Northwest Territories Diamonds**

**HON. JIM ANTOINE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this government, since elected, our Premier and the different Ministers have been making speeches at the different oil and gas conferences, meeting with our counterparts, the different Ministers, and at Premiers' conferences, promoting the idea of the development of resources in the Northwest Territories, and that we would like to maximize any benefits from it if there is any resource development in this area.

A pipeline is one of the resource developments. We have been promoting it and we will continue to promote it. The actual construction and development of the resources is really the work of the oil and gas companies, the producers. There is work underway right now to build a pipeline. We will continue to play a role in trying to promote the development of resources in the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

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

**Question 221-14(5): GNWT Liquor Prices**

**MR. BELL:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Previously in this session, I asked the Minister of Finance about our increased estimates for liquor revenues. I do not think I was satisfied with the answer he gave me. He was speculating, I think, that it was due to an economic upturn or a growing population. I would like him to confirm for me that in fact the prices that our government charges to retailers in Yellowknife did not change with privatization and in fact, they are still the same prices we used to charge? Thank you.

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

**Return to Question 221-14(5): GNWT Liquor Prices**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The prices we charge in Yellowknife, to my knowledge, are the same as we charged before the privatization. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary to Question 221-14(5): GNWT Liquor Prices**

**MR. BELL:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am hoping the Minister can confirm that and verify that is in fact the case, because it is my understanding from talking to people that we have raised the price we charge to retailers. In fact, they have passed it on to consumers. There has been quite an increase in prices.

I would also like to ask the Minister if there was a one-time cash infusion that this government was able to garner as a result of transferring the cost of carrying the inventory from ourselves to the retailers? Thank you.

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

**Further Return to Question 221-14(5): GNWT Liquor Prices**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, no, there is no one-time cash infusion at all. What it does mean is that we are probably using our liquor revolving fund less now than we would be if we were purchasing the liquor for the stores. There is a decrease in the amount we are using in the revolving fund, but we do not have a windfall here. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary to Question 221-14(5): GNWT Liquor Prices**

**MR. BELL:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Maybe the Minister could explain that further for me. It was my understanding that the liquor warehouse in Yellowknife used to carry X amount. They no longer have to carry that same amount because it is up to the retailers now to purchase the inventory, so they have to carry a much lower inventory at the liquor warehouse, which seems to me that would result in a cash infusion to this government, would it not?

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

**Further Return to Question 221-14(5): GNWT Liquor Prices**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, no, the liquor retail outlets in Yellowknife still have to purchase their liquor through the warehouse. They do not purchase it somewhere else. It means that the warehouses are still carrying as much inventory as they used to, but we as a government, we used to own the liquor and the retail stores. Now, the retail stores buy it from the warehouse themselves. It does not change anything for the warehouses. In fact, it may have made it a situation where they have to carry more variety than they used to. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary to Question 221-14(5): GNWT Liquor Prices**

**MR. BELL:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If the inventory that used to be on the liquor store floor was previously owned by this government and has now been purchased by the retailer, obviously that resulted in a one-time cash infusion to this government. I do not understand the Minister's rationale. Maybe he could explain.

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

**Further Return to Question 221-14(5): GNWT Liquor Prices**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, we have a liquor revolving fund that is used for this purpose. There is a maximum to that revolving fund and we will purchase liquor with that fund. We are only into a few months of the new system where the retail stores own the liquor themselves. I have not seen any reports on it yet, but I expect that as a government, we are using less of that revolving fund than we were before, because the storeowners themselves are doing the purchasing directly. It just means the revolving fund is used less than it used to be. There are no savings for us, unless we were to put some limits on that revolving fund. It is a little bit early to do that right now. Thank you.

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

**Question 222-14(5): Support for Fur Harvesters**

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Honourable Jim Antoine, Minister for Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development. My question is on the fur industry, how we see the increases in prices in the fur markets but we have not increased the funding to the communities to support the increase of new trappers who are going out on the land. I would like to ask the Minister if he will be looking at increasing the funding. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Return to Question 222-14(5): Support for Fur Harvesters**

**HON. JIM ANTOINE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we do have the Harvesters' Assistance Program out there. I am going to have to look at it and get some information on that

from the staff at RWED regarding the honourable Member's question. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary to Question 222-14(5): Support for Fur Harvesters**

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is a question I asked earlier in the House to the previous Minister. I was hoping to get some answers. I would just like to say that if they do look into it and there are communities out there that are not getting enough funding but have an increase in trappers, I would like to ask the Minister to make sure they get the funding. Thank you.

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

**Further Return to Question 222-14(5): Support for Fur Harvesters**

**HON. JIM ANTOINE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Western Harvesters Assistance Program has been out there for a number of years. Different communities have taken advantage of this funding to help out their trappers. It was put into place a few years ago. I have to get back to the honourable Member on where it is, specifically in the riding he represents, what kind of funding is available to his communities and where this funding is coming from, if there are additional dollars there to assist additional trappers, if they request it. I am going to have to examine that whole program here. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary to Question 222-14(5): Support for Fur Harvesters**

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am grateful for the answer the Minister gave. Just another question on how the funding is allocated to trappers. The way it is allocated to trappers is through the local band and trappers do not have any input in how it should be divided.

I would like to ask if the Minister could look at maybe setting up a board that will have trapper input into it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Further Return to Question 222-14(5): Support for Fur Harvesters**

**HON. JIM ANTOINE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the funding that comes from the Government of the Northwest Territories to assist trappers does go to community organizations, be it band councils, hunters or trappers associations or committees. There is a funding arrangement there, a contribution agreement that we have to look at to see how we could work with the local recipients of this funding that disperses to the trappers, to see if we could have some

influence in making sure the trappers who do trap are involved in the decisions of how this money gets dispersed. Thank you.

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

**Question 223-14(5): Notification of Rent Increases**

**MR. BRADEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister responsible for the Department of Justice in his capacity as the lead Minister for the Northwest Territories Residential Tenancy Act. Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask, what are the present rules regarding the obligations of landlords to notify tenants of rent increases? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Braden. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Justice, Mr. Allen.

**Return to Question 223-14(5): Notification of Rent Increases**

**HON. ROGER ALLEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My understanding of the rules under the Residential Tenancy Act is that they must give 90 days notice. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Allen. Supplementary, Mr. Braden.

**Supplementary to Question 223-14(5): Notification of Rent Increases**

**MR. BRADEN:** Mr. Speaker, are there any provisions or rules governing the rates of increase that landlords can impose? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Braden. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Justice, Mr. Allen.

**Further Return to Question 223-14(5): Notification of Rent Increases**

**HON. ROGER ALLEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, my understanding of the legalities in this matter is under the statutes, there is no requirement to regulate rents, specifically the private rental market. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary to Question 223-14(5): Notification of Rent Increases**

**MR. BRADEN:** Mr. Speaker, we have fresh evidence of sustained and extraordinarily high rent increases in the Yellowknife market, and I think they are shared by a couple of other communities in the NWT. By the way, I wanted to ask, is there some point at which a government should feel compelled to protect tenants from extraordinarily high and sustained rent increases? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Braden. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Justice, Mr. Allen.

**Further Return to Question 223-14(5): Notification of Rent Increases**

**HON. ROGER ALLEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am familiar with the public debate on the issue of high rents. Again, I am going to base my response on the fact that it is in the private market sector of this debate, so I am not too sure we can really intervene as a government. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary to Question 223-14(5): Notification of Rent Increases**

**MR. BRADEN:** Mr. Speaker, I too have the interests of the private sector at heart, but there equally is a sector of our society that is experiencing undue pressure. Would the government undertake to review this situation and bring back to this Assembly options that would help protect the interests of tenants as well as the needs of landlords and developers? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Braden. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Justice, Mr. Allen.

**Further Return to Question 223-14(5): Notification of Rent Increases**

**HON. ROGER ALLEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am going to respond in the similar text I did yesterday when I was questioned on the functional roles of LHOs and applied rent scales. I would like to advise the Member that I would like to discuss that with the private sector to see if we can assist those who are in need of that assistance.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Minister. Item 7, oral questions. Item 8, written questions. Item 9, returns to written questions. Item 10, replies to opening address. Item 11, petitions. Item 12, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 13, tabling of documents. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

**ITEM 13: TABLING OF DOCUMENTS**

**Tabled Document 26-14(5): Market at a Glance, Yellowknife Winter 2002**

**MR. BRADEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to table a report recently published by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation entitled Market at a Glance, Yellowknife Winter 2002. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Braden. 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. Item 18, second reading of bills. Item 19, consideration in committee of the whole of bills and other matters: Bill 2, Bill 4, Bill 10, Committee Report 1-14(5), Committee Report 2-14(5), Committee Report 314(5). By the authority given to the Speaker by Motion 214(5), the House is resolved into committee of the whole to sit beyond the time of adjournment until the committee is prepared to report, with Mr. Delorey in the chair.

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

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** I would like to call the committee of the whole to order. We have a number of items to deal with. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Dent.

**MR. DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to recommend the committee continue consideration of Bill 2 and Committee Report 1-14(5), Committee Report 2-14(5) and Committee Report 314(5) concurrently, to look specifically at the budget for the Department of Justice, followed by the Department of Finance and then the Legislative Assembly. Should we conclude the consideration of Bill 2, we can move on to Bill 4 and Bill 10.

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** The Chair will call a short break and come back to the Department of Justice.

-- Break

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** I will call the committee of the whole back to order. We are here with the Department of Justice's main estimates. Mr. Allen, do you have any opening remarks?

**HON. ROGER ALLEN:** Yes, I do, Mr. Chairman, if I may begin. I am pleased to introduce the main estimates for the Department of Justice. The Department of Justice has the mandate to administer justice and maintain safe and secure communities in the Northwest Territories. These are issues we are all very concerned about.

The proposed budget for 2002-2003 supports our mandate and reflects the government's priorities, including our Social Agenda and the creation of a healthy society for all Northerners.

The proposed operational budget for the department for the 2002-2003 year is \$69,584,000. The capital acquisition budget is \$18,846,000. The estimated revenues are \$9.8 million annually.

I would like to highlight for the Members the major changes proposed in the budget from the fiscal year 2001-2002. As well, I would like to mention work that we have begun in a number of priority areas that are not reflected in this budget.

For a number of years, the department has supported community efforts to develop and implement alternative solutions to justice issues. The department plans to build on this support by adding \$91,000 to assist the RCMP to dedicate one officer in the full-time restorative justice position. This position will work with the department and the communities to support efforts in this area.

We also plan to increase funding provided to communities for additional community justice activities, including support for victims of crime. Beginning in 2002-2003, funding for community justice will increase by \$302,000.

In response to Members' concerns, and as a result of the department's review, steps are being taken to improve the Wilderness Camp Program. In 2002-2003, a wilderness camp program coordinator position will be introduced and additional support will be provided to the camp operators. These changes will result in increased funding for this program of \$278,000.

The Community Constable Program will be improved to provide meaningful policing support in our smaller communities. Additional resources are especially critical in communities where specific concerns have been identified. Starting in 2002-2003, an additional \$107,000 will be invested in this program. This ongoing funding will help to stabilize our financial support for this program. The Department of Justice also began discussions with officials from Municipal and Community Affairs and the RCMP on other ways to improve this program. We also plan to meet with representatives from our communities to present our ideas on improving the program to get their suggestions and feedback.

In the area of policing, the department has also begun to work to develop a plan to deal with many other policing issues facing us.

There are other changes from last year's budget. In 2002-2003, the department will be preparing for changes that will come about as a result of the new Youth Criminal Justice Act. Increased funding of \$738,000 has been budgeted for this purpose. This increase will be offset by funding from the federal government and is reflected in the department's revenues.

Federal funding will also offset an increase of \$223,000 for legal aid. Funding from the Access to Justice Agreement was provided to all jurisdictions in recognition of rising costs for the delivery of legal aid. In the Northwest Territories, this funding supports a 15 percent increase in the legal aid tariff.

Forced growth also accounts for an increase in our spending. In 2002-2003, an additional \$425,000 is required. This covers increases in air travel, increases in fuel costs for facilities and the RCMP, and to pay for NWT participation in aboriginal land claim negotiations with Saskatchewan and Manitoba.

In 2002-2003, continued capital investment in the new correctional facilities will account for expenditures of just over \$18 million. This investment will see the completion of the young offender facility in Inuvik this spring and the young offender facility in Yellowknife in the fall of 2002. The additional correctional facility in Yellowknife is scheduled to open in the fall of 2003.

Capital improvements at other facilities and the upgrading of our information technology capacity make up the balance of the proposed capital acquisition plan budget. Members will also note a projected increase of \$727,000 in land titles and registries revenue. This is primarily in the area of securities and registration and is reflective of increased business activity in the Northwest Territories.

Members have also identified the development of family violence legislation as a priority. The Department of Justice has completed a preliminary review of this legislation and provided a copy of our report Family Violence Legislation, Interim Status Report to Members. Further research is required to determine if this legislation can be delivered in the Northwest Territories to develop some approaches that might work in our smaller

communities and to cost out these options. I intend to return to Cabinet in June with this information for their consideration.

Overall, Mr. Chairman, the activities described in the main estimates support the priorities of this government. These activities will help make the Northwest Territories a safer and more secure place to live and to work.

Thank you for this opportunity to present the proposed main estimates for the Department of Justice. I will be pleased to answer any questions that you might have. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Minister Allen. Does the Standing Committee on Social Programs have any remarks? Mrs. Groenewegen.

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Standing Committee on Social Programs met with the Minister and his officials on January 18, 2002, to discuss the main estimates for the Department of Justice.

Members noted a \$2,500,000 increase under the capital acquisition plan related to higher costs associated with the construction of the young offender and adult facility in Yellowknife. The committee was told higher costs for labour, geo-technical services and materials all contributed to the \$2,500,000 increase.

Under operations expense, committee members noted a \$62,000 increase for forced growth related to higher heating costs for correctional centres and a \$66,000 reduction in amortization costs when compared to the numbers presented during the review of the business plans.

The Standing Committee on Social Programs would like to complement the Department of Justice on how their main estimates were presented to the committee. Members found it easy to examine each activity and were able to readily determine the breakdown on other expenses. This was not always the case in other departments under the purview of the committee.

#### **Policing in the Northwest Territories**

The Standing Committee on Social Programs has noted in their review of the 2002-2005 business plan that the Department of Justice and the RCMP have done an admirable job in holding the line on costs and in delivering a basic level of policing services.

During the review of the business plans, committee members pointed out to the department that the number of issues and trends affecting the delivery of policing in the Northwest Territories has outstripped the internal ability of the system to adapt without an increase in core funding. Committee members point out that many of the issues and trends affecting policing in the Northwest Territories are of concern to small and large communities.

It is time to revisit the issue of single-member RCMP detachments. The RCMP, rightly concerned about officer safety, is questioning the viability of the single-member detachment.

The standing committee supports the elimination of the single-member detachment and their replacement by a two-member detachment.

Members of the committee are also concerned that increased responsibilities for policing in Wood Buffalo National Park, for doing highway patrols and the increase in inappropriate behaviour associated with the economic boom are resulting in an unmanageable case load for individual RCMP officers.

In the report on the review of the 2002-2005 business plans for the Department of Justice, Members noted that the Government of Nunavut had announced a \$3,500,000 increase to police funding to hire 14 new RCMP officers for Nunavut.

Members also pointed out that given the generally positive financial position of the government, it would be a good time for the Department of Justice, in co-operation with the RCMP, to prepare a submission to the Financial Management Board on the need for an increased police presence in the Northwest Territories.

The Standing Committee on Social Programs was pleased to hear that the Department of Justice is preparing a submission to the Financial Management Board for increased funding to the RCMP for inclusion in next year's business plans. Members would appreciate being kept informed on the status of the submission.

### Community Policing

Members of the standing committee are interested in being kept apprised on the progress made with the communities of Tsiigehtchic, Sachs Harbour and Wrigley, who have no permanent RCMP presence, in addressing their policing needs. Members were pleased with the Minister's commitment to also work with the community of Rae Lakes in addressing their request for a policing presence.

### Legal Aid

The Standing Committee on Social Programs was pleased to hear that it is possible for other agencies, in communities without court workers, to take applications for legal aid and forward them on to the Legal Services Board. This has not been communicated effectively to the community level.

The Standing Committee on Social Programs supports third parties taking applications for legal aid in those communities that do not have a resident court worker. It will be necessary for the Legal Services Board to provide training and support to the third parties in processing the applications.

Committee members noted the Department of Justice would not commit to reform the legal aid system in the Northwest Territories in advance of the completion of a federal research project on legal aid in Canada. The Standing Committee on Social Programs is concerned the Department of Justice is placing too great an emphasis on the results of the federal study. It is pointed out that a study commissioned by the federal government may conclude that the federal government is adequately funding legal aid in Canada.

Members would still encourage the Department of Justice to look for innovative and cost-effective ways of delivering legal aid to NWT residents in advance of release of the federal study expected early in 2003.

Finally, it was also noted that some regions might not be represented on the Legal Services Board. The committee was pleased the Minister agreed to examine the issue of representation on the Legal Services Board.

### Registries

From a quick survey of other Canadian jurisdictions, committee members noted that the majority had either instituted on-line registries or were in a transition phase. The Northwest Territories has automated the personal property register. However, it should be noted that the Northwest Territories personal property register is "piggy-backed" onto the Maritime's shared system. In order to access the information, residents must either pay to subscribe to the service or attend the courthouse in Yellowknife to use the access terminal. This is of little benefit to the average resident of the Northwest Territories living outside of Yellowknife.

From discussions with the Minister and his officials, it is apparent that the department is moving towards automating many of the registry functions. It is possible for securities information to be filed electronically. Land titles are in the process of being scanned.

The department has pointed out that the costs associated with preparing and putting registry information on the Internet are prohibitive. Members understand this and note that other jurisdictions have picked a date whereby afterwards all information is available electronically. Information collected by the registries prior to that date would still be available by hard copy. The Standing Committee on Social Programs strongly encourages the Department of Justice to continue reform of the registry function. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Does the Minister wish to bring in any witnesses?

**HON. ROGER ALLEN:** Mr. Chairman, yes, I do. Thank you.

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Sergeant-at-Arms, would you escort the witnesses in please? The Chair would like to take this opportunity to welcome to the Legislative Assembly a constituent of mine, and a good friend, Mr. Joe Kelly, up in the gallery. Welcome to the Legislative Assembly, Joe.

-- Applause

Mr. Minister, please introduce your witnesses for the record.

**HON. ROGER ALLEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As a gentleman, I am first going to introduce the director of corporate services, Ms. Louise Dundas-Matthews, to my right; to my left is the deputy minister, Mr. Don Cooper. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Allen. General comments. Detail. Justice, services to government, page 79, operations expense, total operations expense, \$7,768,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Page 7-11, services to government, grants and contributions, grants, \$70,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Contributions, \$3,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Total grants and contributions, \$73,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Page 7-13, law enforcement, operations expense. Mr. Dent.

**MR. DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, as was noted in the committee report, when we talked to the Minister during the review of the draft main estimates, there was a commitment made that the department would move to present the case for increased funding for improved police services in the next business plan.

I know that Nunavut recently announced an extra \$3.5 million in spending in order to add 14 officers. I am not sure that they waited for another year for that to happen. I think the announcement was that was happening right away.

I wanted to press the Minister to see if there was any opportunity for him to make the case in advance of the business plan and look to coming back for supplementary funding in order to deal with this urgent police issue. It is something we have heard a lot from Members around the Territories, that this is a problem that is in small communities, it is in big communities, it is a problem in the larger communities. We really do have a problem with the level of police services. I guess the question is can we see some results before the next budget?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Allen.

**HON. ROGER ALLEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will speak briefly about the approach we are taking as a department. First of all, we are working with FMB and Cabinet to develop a plan to deal with the many policing issues facing us. That varies from the Community Constable Program to our ongoing liaison with the RCMP under the RCMP policing agreement. There is more to the development, so I am going to ask, with the Chair's concurrence, for Mr. Cooper to speak to the specific discussion that has been taking place between the RCMP and ourselves. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Allen. Mr. Cooper.

**MR. COOPER:** Mr. Chairman, as a result of the press release issued by the Yellowknife detachment of the Yellowknife RCMP late last month, I met with the commanding officer of G division. Of course, that press release spoke to the issue of under-capacity and the inability to continue with former levels of policing service in Yellowknife.

In the course of those discussions, the chief superintendent indicated to me that he was undertaking a widespread audit of all detachments, starting with the Yellowknife detachment with a commitment of 10 members, most of whom will be from F division in Saskatchewan. They are going to be auditing all of the police detachments and dealing with this issue of capacity head on. We should have those results within three months and be in a better position to rationalize any plan we might

have with respect to increasing the G division complement at that time.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Cooper. Mr. Dent.

**MR. DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To the best of my recollection, there has been no substantial increase in the funding for police services in about the last ten years, I believe. I would say we are long overdue to adjust the level of service we have in the contract, simply as a result of growth over the last ten years in our population.

I look forward to hearing from the Minister the results of the audit that the RCMP is taking and the government's response. The deputy said this would likely take place within the next three months. Will we likely have enough information for the Minister to make a statement about where he sees us heading with the police services agreement in the June session?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Allen.

**HON. ROGER ALLEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Certainly with respect to the Yellowknife detachment, as well as the other communities because it is incumbent upon ourselves, we will be travelling to several small communities in the next several weeks to discuss further some of the policing issues we raised as far back as last October to December and onward, ongoing to this day.

Yes, I am prepared to work with the Members to bring something back to the House here in June that might at least give an interim report or some formal report that reflects the ongoing work we are doing on a territorial basis. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Allen. Page 7-13, law enforcement, operations expense, total operations expense, \$19,621,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Page 7-15, law enforcement, grants and contributions, \$72,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Total contributions, \$72,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Page 7-17, public legal services, operations expense, total operations expense, \$3,578,000. Mr. Dent.

**MR. DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. When the committee was examining the draft main estimates, we had some discussion with the Minister and his staff about the level of support for legal aid. There is some concern among committee members that the amount of money that is in the budget for legal aid is inadequate and the waiting list for service has become far too long.

I know we discussed with the Minister why we would not consider putting more money in. We were told that one of the things the Minister wanted to wait for was the federal study into legal aid, which is targeted to be concluded in 2003.



I would like to ask the Minister, why would we feel it necessary to wait for the completion of that study when we have such a backlog of cases right now? Why can we not advance money into legal aid? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Allen.

**HON. ROGER ALLEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My apology for the delay, Mr. Chairman. The point is well taken. I do not want to use this as an excuse, being relatively new to the portfolio, but if I may request of the Chair to allow Mr. Cooper to respond to that question. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Allen. Mr. Cooper.

**MR. COOPER:** Mr. Chairman, the Member does have a valid point. The Legal Aid Society is an independent body, structured that way, but administered by the Department of Justice. We could benefit from an examination of the respective roles, however. While the Minister of Justice should never tell the society how to operate or interfere in any way with cases, when it comes to the administration of the public funds, we do need to take a closer look at that.

I would just like to add that most legal aid societies in this country are facing financial ruin and collapse. As an example, in Winnipeg, the most senior lawyer and the most serious criminal case would get paid \$40 per hour. Our lawyers are paid \$115 per hour, which is second only to Nunavut, which recently got a raise. Even at those figures, no one is getting wealthy doing these cases. It is a fair hourly rate for public legal services. We are one of a few jurisdictions that continue to fund family law matters. Most jurisdictions have cut that funding out completely and many, many jurisdictions will not give a legal aid certificate to those charged with criminal offences unless a conviction is likely to result in a term of imprisonment.

So while we have problems in our system, it should be pointed out that we remain one of the best systems in Canada in terms of delivery of service. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Cooper. Mr. Dent.

**MR. DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Though we may have a good system, or as good a system as anyone else in Canada, we still have the problem of a growing list of people who are waiting for service. When I look at what has happened over the past few years in terms of spending on legal aid, it is actually lower in the budget year that we are proposing than it was two years prior, 2000-2001, according to the book that we have.

In our budget books, it says that in 2000-2001, we spent over \$3 million and we are proposing in 2002-2003 just under \$3 million. Not a huge decrease, but that is what I see when I look at the Legal Aid Program. I may have jumped a bit ahead, Mr. Chairman, because I am looking at page 7-18, which outlines the details of the spending. I know we were talking about the program summary, but because those monies are included in the summary, I jumped ahead to look.

So our books are showing that we have, in effect, slightly decreased the amount of spending. Inflation has taken place. Our population has grown, so obviously -- at least, we think our population has grown. Stats Canada obviously does not. I am wondering why we would not at least keep up with inflation and put a little bit more money into legal aid. If we have it, why

would we not try and put enough money in that so we can cut down on the waiting list? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Allen.

**HON. ROGER ALLEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would request that the Chair allow Ms. Dundas-Matthews to respond to that question. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you. Ms. Dundas-Matthews.

**MS. DUNDAS-MATTHEWS:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just to confirm, I am not sure whether I follow the columns the Member is referring to. Is it the 2000-2001 actuals compared to the 2001-2002 main estimates? I am also not getting the fact that the budget is dropping.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Ms. Dundas-Matthews. I think he is looking to the next page, 7-18. Mr. Dent, do you want to confirm that?

**MR. DENT:** Mr. Chairman, because page 7-17 is a budget summary, I had actually looked ahead to the details in order to ascertain exactly what was being spent on that program, because the funds from page 7-18 are included on page 7-17. What I am comparing, I am going across the budget line itself right to the 2000-2001 actuals. I am saying that we have a period of two years contained in our budget books. If you look back to 2000-2001, the actual spending was just over \$3 million. In 2001-2002, the revised estimates were \$2,999,000 and what we are seeing in the main estimates for 2002-2003 is \$2,997,000.

It is not a huge drop. We are only talking about \$36,000 less in the course of two years, but my point is we have more people trying to access legal aid today than we did two years ago. Inflation has gone up. I am just surprised we have not found a little bit more money to put in the program to at least keep up with the growth in demand.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Cooper.

**MR. COOPER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There have been discussions between the department's representative, Mr. Sutton, and the executive director of legal aid concerning this issue, because the board of legal aid has represented more than once that it is under-funded. Legal aid has been asked on many different occasions to put forth a submission that we can take forward to make a business case for why an increase is merited.

To put it bluntly, we advised the Legal Services Board that we cannot simply say that we need more money. You have to generate a case for why that is in terms of numbers of cases and so on. That has not been forthcoming.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Cooper. Mr. Dent.

**MR. DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have to admit that I am quite surprised to hear that. I would have thought they would be doing whatever it took to put the pressure on to get more money because I have heard that the waiting list is growing for access to their services.

I guess we will have to wait until their application does come forward. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Dent. Page 717, public legal services, operations expense, total operations expense, \$3,578,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Page 7-19, public legal services, contributions, \$300,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Total contributions, \$300,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Page 7-21, registries and court services, operations expense, total operations expense, \$8,917,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Page 7-23. Mr. Braden, did you have a question? Mr. Braden.

**MR. BRADEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just thought I misheard you on page 7-21. I think the number you read in was \$8,917 and I believe we are looking at millions there.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Braden. For the record then, total operations expense, \$8,917,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Page 7-23, registries and court services, grants and contributions, grants, \$3,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Total grants, \$3,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Page 7-25, community justice and corrections. Mr. Dent.

**MR. DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I understand one of the big problems with reducing recidivism is when people are released from jail, they often go back to communities and there are not any support programs to help them reintegrate back into society.

Has the department looked at all at working with community justice committees or other agencies in the communities to develop reintegration programs to try and reduce the rate of recidivism?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Allen.

**HON. ROGER ALLEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, certainly that is one of our main objectives, to help offenders reintegrate back into communities. There are a number of methodologies, most likely using traditional approaches. That is certainly one of our main objectives here, to help those who are incarcerated reintegrate back into the communities. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Allen. Mr. Dent.

**MR. DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. What sort of process is being used to develop the programs to reintegrate offenders back into the community other than just the community-based projects? Is that on-the-land programs? Is that really the extent of the programming or are there programs that go beyond that?

For instance, I know when an offender is incarcerated, they can access programs like anger management, but it may be useful to access that kind of programming back in a community. Is there any effort to try and see that programming made more broadly available throughout the North?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Allen.

**HON. ROGER ALLEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If a person who is on parole or has been put back into the community for aftercare, we do have probation services that provide some formal guidance. When they are officially released, it is strictly a volunteer process, to which we have no control over how that individual conducts himself. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. Dent.

**MR. DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It sounds like there is no real formal integration program. Are there any connections between the Department of Justice and the Department of Health and Social Services to perhaps look at whether or not it might be worthwhile instituting some form of counselling services for inmates who have been recently released, to assist them with the transition back into life in a community?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Minister Allen.

**HON. ROGER ALLEN:** Mr. Chairman, no, I do not believe there are any formal links between the two departments, but from my own personal experience, we have tried to work with the individuals where they reintegrate into the communities and look at some form of work in terms of job satisfaction, then they start feeling like part of the community. That is certainly one of the encouraging areas we have worked with individuals on in the past.

To the specific question, no, there is no formal link between Health and Social Services and ourselves. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. Dent.

**MR. DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Not a question, but a comment. I hope that the Minister of the department will perhaps take an opportunity to discuss with Health and Social Services whether or not there might not be a collaborative approach to assisting people get back into the community and make sure that they are assisted to make productive choices and try and reduce the numbers that return to incarceration as a result of not having that support. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Minister Allen.

**HON. ROGER ALLEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, certainly that is one of the key areas we want to look at in the very near future, to assist those who are returning to the communities to reintegrate and not to re-offend. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. McLeod.

**MR. MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to ask the Minister if he can give me some information regarding the

Wilderness Camp Program and, more specifically, the status of what is happening to the camp at Axe Point near Fort Providence?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Minister Allen.

**HON. ROGER ALLEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If I may request that the deputy minister respond to the question.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. Cooper.

**MR. COOPER:** Mr. Chairman, my understanding is that it is shut down temporarily over the winter but is expected to open up again sometime in the spring.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. McLeod.

**MR. MCLEOD:** Thank you. Mr. Chairman, this is an issue that has been ongoing, the Axe Point Camp being able to operate throughout the year. It is something we have raised with the Department of Justice on a number of occasions. It is regarding the difficulty we have bringing the clients in from the different facilities.

Although it can house up to eight people, we usually only have two people in the wilderness camp. When I go into the institutions, I see there are a lot of people who are approaching me and talking to me about wanting to be housed in the wilderness camp or go through the program. Yet there seems to be -- I am not sure what kind of complication there is but there seems to be a complication throughout the system that does not allow that to happen.

The response we get to our enquiries is that there is really no one who wants to go to the camps. We have to have people who want to go to camps in order to send them there, is the answer I am getting. I do not know if I agree with that because I do not seem to get that sense when I go into the correctional facility. There seems to be a lot of people who want to go into the camps. This camp is close to the Hay River correctional facility and we cannot seem to get the numbers in the camp that we require. Can the Minister tell us if he has an opinion on that?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Minister Allen.

**HON. ROGER ALLEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My understanding of the procedures is that the individuals make an application if they want to go to the bush camp, and it is voluntary. In terms of whether it is policy, then I would ask the deputy minister to speak to that. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. Cooper.

**MR. COOPER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My understanding is that every inmate is assessed when he enters an institution and a program is set up for that inmate. It depends on what the crime is and the history the inmate has. There could be things that corrections determines the inmate has to work on, issues this inmate has to work on if this inmate is going to progress and hopefully lead a non-criminal life when he or she is released. Some inmates, and for other reasons, the bush camp experience is not made available to them. There are a number who are free to sign up for bush camps and they get to choose the bush camps they wish to go to. We do our best not to interfere or try to steer inmates to a certain camp or in a particular direction. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. McLeod.

**MR. MCLEOD:** Mr. Chairman, in my opinion, this is a good program. The people who are familiar with this camp, especially the one in Fort Providence, all agree the Wilderness Camp Program is a good program. However, there does not seem to be easy access to these camps. The people we are talking about who request to take this program and go to these camps are for the most part aboriginal people. We have a good success rate.

I do not know if I agree with some of the explanation where the deputy minister is stating that some of these people do not qualify to go. At some point, these people in the correctional facilities are going to be released. The ones I have talked to all have informed me that they have tried to get into the program. Even when they knew they had a release date of two or three months, they still wanted to take this program on the tail end of their sentence. However, they were not given that privilege.

If they are considered to be reformed, or whatever the assessment determines so that they can be released, surely they can be released into a camp for the last portion of their sentence, but we are not even getting that.

I do not know if there is a good explanation. I think there is a problem with the process and the system. If these people are on the verge of being released, I would think they could get into the camp program. There are very few of them getting into our camps. Our camps are being forced to shut down because they cannot get the people in the facilities. A lot of these communities and individuals have invested a lot of money into these facilities. We are not getting the response.

I do not know if I agree with that argument. I am not sure if this question was raised before, but I see it is being advertised for additional facilities. I am wondering if the Minister can explain what is happening there.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Minister Allen.

**HON. ROGER ALLEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Again, it goes back to the point I made earlier, that our understanding of the wilderness camps is that it is voluntarily applied for.

I also understand from discussions with some of my colleagues in Justice that it is intended for those who are at low risk or may be prepared to re-enter into the community society. I do not have any statistics that tells my colleagues or me the number of those who may have applied or will apply.

The point here is the open custody camp facilities are available to those people. Again, I am not sure how they are assessed, but the point is, Mr. Chairman, it is available to those who voluntarily apply to go. We certainly encourage it, from our own perspective.

May I ask the Chair to allow Mr. Cooper to speak more specifically to the process?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. Cooper.

**MR. COOPER:** The inmates are made aware that at a certain point in their term of imprisonment, they will be eligible to go to a bush camp if they wish to, and the camp of their choice. We have had complaints from certain operators that perhaps they are not getting enough inmates.

On occasion, in response, we have made a special effort to go through the inmate population again. I have directed this at least twice to see if there are any inmates who are interested in going to a certain place. At the end of the day, it is voluntary.

Now, we are doing things in a certain fashion. Some inmates, not every single inmate that we have is deemed appropriate for the bush camp experience. That is a policy decision and one would have to change that. One would have to make a serious policy decision to say that the bush camp experience would be more beneficial to an inmate than would the closer supervision one would get in incarceration. I am not sure that would be the thing to do but we are supporting this program.

We are one of the very few jurisdictions in the country that does have such a program and we support it. It is working very well and we are trying to ascertain what the results of the program are now in terms of measures. Are the people who go to the bush camps succeeding better than those who do not go to the bush camps? These are issues that we have to deal with.

With respect to one other issue, the Member said we are going out and advertising for more bush camps. My understanding is that the contracts are up and they are all out for proposals again this year.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. Roland.

**MR. ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In the area of community justice and corrections, this is an issue I had contacted the Minister on. I wanted to get it on the record here. In the area of the facilities that are maintained right now and those new ones that would be coming on line, issues were raised in my constituency around the programming that would be offered to inmates and the choice of programming, mainly in the area of church services and spiritual counselling.

As well, concerns were raised in the Delta. I received calls not only from my own constituents but also from the surrounding communities. They felt that family members who were in those facilities, however unfortunate that is, would not be allowed to practice their faith or the family faith that they have grown accustomed to. Those doors would be closed. Then, on top of that, concerns of if that is the case and they do not take that programming, or disagree to take it, they would be deemed as uncooperative or not wanting to take counselling and it would affect how they were dealt with.

I did communicate with the Minister on that issue. I wanted to raise it here again as an area of concern, just to ensure that as we are looking at newer ways of dealing with inmates, yes, some would be deemed appropriate. I think it is still a matter of individuals having the right to choose which services they could acquire in the area of spiritual counselling. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Minister Allen.

**HON. ROGER ALLEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, we give the individual the freedom of religion. Therefore, we are certainly not going to force the individual to practice other than what they believe. I do not see this as a reason for them to be penalized in any such way because they do have their own personal religion and convictions. I believe we shall respect that. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. Bell.

**MR. BELL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a couple of questions about counselling for young offenders, specifically when it comes to addictions counselling. I wonder if the Minister can talk a bit about what our corrections division locally here in Yellowknife does. What kind of counselling is offered to young offenders with addictions problems?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Minister Allen.

**HON. ROGER ALLEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With your permission, I would like to go out beyond the borders of Yellowknife and perhaps talk about my own personal experiences as a group home operator. Once the young offenders have experienced problems in terms of drug and alcohol addictions, we work with the individual to encourage them to take some formal counselling. We also have advocated in the past to talk to professionals. In this case, they would be utilizing the psychology services provided through Health and Social Services, the Inuvik Regional Health Board. If the Member needs further clarification, we are prepared to answer that. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. Bell.

**MR. BELL:** I guess I am looking for the Minister to discuss the programs that are available here locally. I have had some constituents contact me sometimes with children who are young offenders, wondering if in fact we have adequate counselling services for those who I guess (a), would be incarcerated, and then (b), others who are not. For youth who are not, sometimes it seemed to be a matter of having to get them into a facility in the south.

We are building a new facility here in the city and maybe the Minister could indicate if in fact counselling for addiction problems, if that programming will be offered in the new facility. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Minister Allen.

**HON. ROGER ALLEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We do not have specific details about programs but certainly our intention, and we will advocate the need to continue our support service in a number of areas, such as psychological counselling, alcohol and drug addictions counselling, joint family parental type of services. There is a wide range of them. Specifically, we do not have any information to the degree of the services provided at this time. We will take this and have it incorporated into the new facilities and the management of those new facilities. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. Bell.

**MR. BELL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am wondering if the Minister can give me some indication how the department currently feels it is addressing this problem. I wonder if the Minister could possibly speak to whether or not they feel they have been successful in dealing with young offenders' addictions problems at this point.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Minister Allen.

**HON. ROGER ALLEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If I can draw on my own personal experience and talk in the generalities of the young offenders program and the rehabilitation process,

yes, I believe the success rate is fairly high. I do not have any specific numbers.

From my own personal knowledge, they respond quite well. The problem is when they leave the facility and they turn into the adult age, then some of those problems reoccur.

In general, while they are in the system, there is a high level of success in addressing and re-addressing some of those problem areas. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you, Mr. Bell.

**MR. BELL:** I appreciate his discussion of his personal experience. I am wondering if he would have any quantifiable data that might let us analyze how our approach has been working to this point, possibly compared to other jurisdictions. Would he have any sort of data that might back up his own personal experience that we have been successful inside the facilities but that there seems to be some degree of relapse or recidivism once the young offenders leave the facility? Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Minister Allen.

**HON. ROGER ALLEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, those are difficult questions to answer at the moment, but we will endeavour to provide that as soon as we can. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. Bell.

**MR. BELL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In relation to the new facility that is being built in Yellowknife, I am wondering if the Minister can indicate, when it comes to programming, he did talk about what the Department of Health and Social Services is doing in the community. I am wondering if the department has had any formal discussions with the Department of Health and Social Services about programming for young offenders with addictions problems in the new facility when it is built? Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Minister Allen.

**HON. ROGER ALLEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am not sure, as I expressed earlier, the exact type of programs that we deliver, but our intention is to provide direction that the drug and alcohol counselling will be incorporated into a general plan for the young offenders. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. Bell.

**MR. BELL:** Thank you. At an officials level, have there been formalized discussions between the Department of Health and Social Services and the Department of Justice about programming in the new facility to this point?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. Allen.

**HON. ROGER ALLEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. No, I am not aware, but I am sure that through the social envelope group, we would be prepared to discuss that further. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. Bell.

**MR. BELL:** Thank you. I guess I am just trying to push the point here, Mr. Chairman, to make sure that the two departments are in fact discussing these kinds of issues. Once a facility has been constructed, it is difficult if adequate

planning and space was not allocated for programming to go back and rebuild the facility. I would hope that the people who are in the business of delivering this type of program, which would be the Department of Health and Social Services, and also Justice, when it comes to facilities, would be consulted in these matters.

I did have questions for the Department of Health and Social Services earlier about programming in the new facility and did get a response back from the Minister that indicated that the Department of Justice felt that their current approach had been fairly successful, but that Justice had indicated its willingness to consider development of addiction treatment programs for delivery within correction facilities if, on review, it was shown that another approach was warranted.

I suppose I had just hoped that in answering my questions this way, the Department of Health and Social Services was in fact consulting with the Department of Justice, and the Department of Justice did indicate that it was willing to look at all the possibilities and all the possible methodologies for delivering programming. It would seem a shame to build a brand new facility simply to lock young people up and not to adequately address their programming needs.

I just want to encourage the Minister to at least enter into formalized discussions with the Department of Health and Social Services on these types of issues. I think it is important. Going forward, they have a relationship, they have an ongoing relationship to work on these types of programming issues when it comes to young offenders with addictions problems. We know for children in our community who may not be incarcerated, sometimes it is difficult to get the adequate level of counselling they need, if in fact they need to be in a facility. I think there is an availability of out-patient services but not necessarily residential. Sometimes it is a matter of having to get them into facilities in the south.

It would seem that if we could kill a couple of birds with one stone and have drug and alcohol treatment programs available in the young offenders' facility, it would make a lot of sense and it might save us from having to send young offenders who were released eventually to the south for programming and for treatment. I would just like to encourage the Minister to continue on that road.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. Allen.

**HON. ROGER ALLEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just to lend clarity to the points there, we still want to support the ongoing existing establishments, such as alcohol and drug treatment centres, the existing programs that are delivered at the community level. Certainly when you talk about overall programming, we need to look at the community resources that are already provided. Then we could take a look at our client base and see where those specific to young offenders would fit, either through local family counselling services or alcohol and drug committees, or a number of processes that are developed locally to support the rehabilitation process.

I wanted to let the Member know that we are aware of that and we will continue to promote that within our institutions. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. McLeod.

**MR. MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, since I have been elected, over the last couple of years in the 14<sup>th</sup> Assembly I have been raising the issue and trying to demonstrate the need that we have to spread our resources from this government across the board, and not pool all the facilities, all the infrastructure into a few major, larger centres. Judging by the capital plan this year and for the next couple of years, it is pretty obvious that I have not been successful.

It really bothers me because there is a methodology that we could utilize to encourage and stimulate the economy in our communities, but that would mean devolving some of these responsibilities into the smaller communities. Unfortunately, the capital plan was set, for the most part, in the 13<sup>th</sup> Assembly for the capital projects, especially in the area of Justice and a few of the bigger projects. We really did not have a say or any type of debate where the new jails were going to go, or where the new facilities were going to go.

I wanted to ask the Department of Justice if they could explain to me why none of the smaller communities, such as Fort Providence or Fort Simpson, or Rae-Edzo or Fort McPherson, is ever considered to house these facilities, the new jails or the new youth centres?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Minister Allen.

**HON. ROGER ALLEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Perhaps the Member is quite correct that these decisions are reflective of the previous Assembly. We are carrying out the wishes of the government of the day. It is hard for us to determine. Again, I think if there are new facilities constructed in the future, we have to really respect the wishes of the Members.

I guess one point that should be raised here is that, and just taking an excerpt from what the demographers say, the larger migration to the urban centres, and that is usually where the level of professional services is rendered, to the population in general.

Like I said earlier, our objective here is to continue to provide a level of service to the inmates, as well as to others who are incarcerated into our facilities, whether it is adult corrections or under the young offenders program.

That is the basic answer we have for the Member today. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. McLeod.

**MR. MCLEOD:** Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask the Minister if he could tell me what he means by professional services. Does that mean medical people? What does that mean?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. Allen.

**HON. ROGER ALLEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It may extend to the medical profession. It may extend into other professional areas. I am not certain, but that seems to be the trend. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. McLeod.

**MR. MCLEOD:** Mr. Chairman, the Minister is saying that the communities are good enough for the ordinary Joe on the street, the aboriginal people and everybody else who lives in

the small communities but not good enough for an inmate. Is that what he is saying?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Minister Allen.

**HON. ROGER ALLEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I hope the Member is not trying to put words into my mouth. I am certainly not going to be discriminating small communities because I do come from one myself.

The point is that we are trying to support small communities by having open custody placements anywhere there are camp settings, as well as other small communities that could support the intention of the corrections. I really cannot answer much more, other than what I said. Some of these decisions reflect on previous Assemblies and I cannot answer for that. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. McLeod.

**MR. MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I can appreciate the Minister's comments that some of this direction and decisions were made in the 13<sup>th</sup> Assembly. However, he stated that he supports the communities and the smaller communities by offering support to the open custody, the wilderness camps. His deputy ministers have also stated the same comments, that the Department of Justice supports wilderness camps.

I would like to ask the Minister if he could tell me how many wilderness camps have shut down in the last two years?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. Allen.

**HON. ROGER ALLEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do not have the exact number of camps that are shut down, but if I may, for the record, there are 11 adult wilderness camps in operation as of February 11, 2002. Under the young offenders, alternative open custody home operators, open custody contracts, February 11, 2002, a total of seven. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. McLeod.

**MR. MCLEOD:** Could I get the Minister to repeat that answer? I am not clear. Did he say seven camps shut down?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. Allen.

**HON. ROGER ALLEN:** No, Mr. Chairman, I was stating for the record that we have 11 adult wilderness camps in operation as of February 11, 2002...

-- Interjection

My apologies, Mr. Chairman. There are four operators for adult wilderness camps who are housing, as of February 11, 2002 and 11 offenders in the adult corrections.

For the young offenders, there are eight, with a number of seven young offenders in placement. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. McLeod.

**MR. MCLEOD:** Mr. Chairman, I find it very ironic that the Minister cannot tell me how many camps were shut down, yet he knows how many are operating, when he knew how many

camps were operating two years ago. To me, that would be simple math. I am not satisfied that there is support. Maybe the Minister could tell me what camps are now operating for adult facilities, if he is not willing to tell me which ones are shut down. The four that are operating, can he give me the names?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Minister Allen.

**HON. ROGER ALLEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Currently, there are two adult wilderness camps open and in operation, Kozo Lake in Fort Smith, the Simpson Islands, six, and those who are temporarily closed and not in operation is Hume River and Axe Point. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. McLeod.

**MR. MCLEOD:** Mr. Chairman, the Minister said there were four operating camps. He has only mentioned two that are operating. What are the other two that are operating?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. Allen.

**HON. ROGER ALLEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. For the record, there are four camp operators, of which two are active and two are inactive, with a total number of offenders in the two camps numbering 11 -- one has five, the other has six. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. McLeod.

**MR. MCLEOD:** I would like to thank the Minister for clarifying that because his initial answer was that there were four operators and it was projected as if it were four operating camps. In my count, I would estimate there were at least eight camps two years ago. I cannot believe that the Minister is saying we are supporting our camps when there are only two left. Could he tell me why the camps are shutting down?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. Allen.

**HON. ROGER ALLEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As we said earlier, one of the reasons why there is a lower number of offenders attending the camps is that it is based on voluntarily going to those camps. There is a procedure in place. I do not have the exact details of how that is being administered, but what we are saying is that there are currently 11 offenders who currently reside in two of those four camps. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. McLeod.

**MR. MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Maybe the Minister could tell me how he could justify his comment and his deputy minister's comment by saying "We are supporting the communities" when in fact there are only two camps operating. Tell me what he is doing. If he could tell us what he is doing to justify and give him confidence to make such a statement out in public.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Minister Allen.

**HON. ROGER ALLEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We do support camp operators. We have four adult camps registered, effective February 11<sup>th</sup>. Two of those four adult camps are currently operating. Two are inactive but they are still listed. Then we have eight young offender, alternative open-custody contracts effective February 11, 2002. Of these, five have

offenders and three do not at this point, as of February 11<sup>th</sup>. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Page 725, community justice and corrections, operations expense, total operations expense, \$29,700,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Page 726. Page 727, community justice and corrections, grants and contributions, contributions, \$1,294,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Total contributions, \$1,294,000. Mr. Dent.

**MR. DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I notice that under community justice committees and projects, while there appears to be an increase over last year's main estimates -- it is an increase over last year's main estimates. I note that during the course of this current year, we have obviously approved supplementary appropriations bringing the total amount spent on community justice committees and projects to \$923,000, but we are only proposing \$879,000 for 2002-2003. While there is a significant increase over what was initially brought forward last year, in fact, there is a bit of a decrease over what we are actually going to spend this year. Why are we going to spend less money in the next fiscal year than what we are in this current fiscal year?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Ms. Matthews.

**MS. MATTHEWS:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The explanation for that is there was one-time funding approved in the current fiscal year in Supplementary Appropriation No. 2, I believe. It was funding that was provided to the Grolier Hall Healing Circle for the alternative dispute resolution process. It was one-time money and that is why it does not continue into the next fiscal year. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. Dent.

**MR. DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That is the only question I have on this page.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Grants and contributions, contributions, \$1,294,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Total contributions, \$1,294,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Page 728, active positions. Page 7-29, details of work performed on behalf of others. Mr. McLeod.

**MR. MCLEOD:** Mr. Chairman, I have a question on page 7-28.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. McLeod.

**MR. MCLEOD:** Mr. Chairman, I wanted to ask a question regarding the active positions and future consideration. I do not see a lot of improvement in terms of the communities that I represent when it comes down to parole officers, court workers

and other positions. However, it is the parole officers that I am concerned about. I do not have any based in any of the communities that I represent, and I represent four. Could the Minister tell me if at any point we will see any new positions created and more specifically, if any will be considered for my communities?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Minister Allen.

**HON. ROGER ALLEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Since the deputy of the department is responsible for staff, perhaps I will ask him to respond to that question. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. Cooper.

**MR. COOPER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Approximately three years ago, the department set up probation services with due money voted by the Assembly. A plan was laid out at that time for the delivery of probation services, I think based on the number of cases a probation officer held. I cannot tell the Member today why it was that a decision was made to place three probation officers in Hay River with responsibilities for case work in I believe Fort Providence, probably Enterprise and possibly some other communities as well...probably Fort Resolution as well. It may be based on an analysis of the case work in that community did not warrant a full-time probation officer, but I can undertake to check into that, check into the rationale behind having a regional office in Hay River with three or four people in it and, on behalf of the Minister, advise the Member.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. McLeod.

**MR. MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Cooper has beaten me to my question. That is actually where I was heading. I had some concern up until now regarding the positions being situated where they are. I do have a concern that we have three positions located in a regional centre and none in my communities.

If there are not enough cases in Fort Providence, for example, to warrant a full-time officer, I do not see what the difference is of having someone located in Fort Providence and carrying some of the workload for Hay River. There is no difference from that person living in Hay River and carrying the workload for Fort Providence. In fact, there will probably be more cases from Fort Providence for that person living in Hay River than if it goes vice versa.

We have to consider that we have a ferry system and we are looking at using charters. How much is that costing? I do not think it is fair. Again, I want to bring up the disparity that there is in this government to invest in some of the communities. They are reluctant to post not only positions but also infrastructure.

I would appreciate if the Minister would commit to reviewing the situation in Hay River or Fort Simpson, wherever the positions may be, and relocate some of those positions and spread the opportunity for employment into some of the other places. We seem to have a bottleneck all the time in the regional centres.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Minister Allen.

**HON. ROGER ALLEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That is certainly a point well taken and I will work with our department to review the circumstances. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Page 729, details of work performed on behalf of others. Mr. Nitah.

**MR. NITAH:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, before I get to this page, I would just like to echo the sentiments expressed by my colleague, Mr. McLeod, on devolving some of the work and employment opportunities to the communities of the Northwest Territories.

The question I would like to ask deals with legal services for the NWT Housing Corporation. I would like to ask if they provide advice in terms of municipal taxes. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Minister Allen.

**HON. ROGER ALLEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe the level of legal service provided to the NWT Housing Corporation is in the context of real estate and other transactions that occur. I am going to ask the deputy minister if he can assist me in providing a more detailed answer. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. Cooper.

**MR. COOPER:** Mr. Chairman, some years ago, perhaps 15 years ago, there was a situation in terms of ministerial assignments, similar to that of today, wherein one Minister, the Minister of Justice, was also the Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation. The Housing Corporation in those days operated very much as an independent legal entity, as a third party, as it were, almost from government. The decision was made 15 years ago for the Housing Corporation to give the Department of Justice \$50,000 a year as a block retainer against any and all legal services that it might wish to purchase from the government. I had discussions with one president of the Housing Corporation in 1996 if he saw any need to change that arrangement. He did not, I have not, and so we do whatever legal work we are asked to do by the NWT Housing Corporation and it provides its retainer of \$50,000 to our department every year.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. Nitah.

**MR. NITAH:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, so it is just a retainer fee for the legal services you provide. All right. Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask if the Minister could give us a little bit more background in the area of the estates clerk, on behalf of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, administers estates of native persons. Could I get an explanation please? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. Cooper.

**MR. COOPER:** That amount of money has been in our budget year in and year out, as far as I am aware, Mr. Chairman. That money is provided to us, I believe by DIAND, to our public trustee for the purpose of acting on behalf of deceased indigent aboriginal people and their estates.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you, Mr. Cooper, the microphone was off, if you could finish.

**MR. COOPER:** Would you like me to repeat that, Mr. Chairman?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Yes.



**MR. COOPER:** Sorry, that budget line item has been there for many years. It is a set sum provided to the department for the public trustee to administer the estates of deceased aboriginal people who die in an indigent state. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. Nitah.

**MR. NITAH:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do not have anymore questions in this area.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. We are on page 7-29, details of work performed on behalf of others.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Page 7-32, details of work performed on behalf of others, total department, \$1,527,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Page 7-33, revenues, recoveries and transfer payments.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** We will go back to page 7-7, operations expense, total operations expense, \$69,584,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** I will read this out again. Page 7-7, department summary, operations expense, total operations expense...Mr. Nitah.

**MR. NITAH:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Can we go back to page 7-32, please?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Mr. Nitah wishes to go back to page 7-32. Does the committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Mr. Nitah.

**MR. NITAH:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, this page deals with the details of work performed on behalf of others. Safer streets, an agreement with the chamber of commerce respecting measures taken to provide a safer environment for residents and visitors to Yellowknife, a total budget of \$1.5 million. Can the Minister explain a little on this work done on behalf of others and the budget associated with it? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Nitah. Mr. Allen.

**HON. ROGER ALLEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There is no money allocated to safer streets. That \$1,527,000 is a total of pages 7-29, 7-30 and 7-31. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Allen. Page 7-32, detail of work performed on behalf of others, total department, \$1,527,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** We will go back to page 7-7, Justice, department summary, operations expense, total operations expense, \$69,584,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** We go to the capital acquisition plan, cap-12, Justice, registries and court services, total registries and court services, \$120,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Community justice and corrections, total community justice and corrections, \$18,466,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Services to government, total services to government, \$125,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Public legal services, total public legal services, \$135,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Total department, \$18,846,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Does the committee agree that concludes the Department of Justice?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Minister, and to your witnesses, for appearing. As previously agreed, we will go on to the Department of Finance. Does the Minister have any opening comments? Mr. Handley.

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, yes, I do. Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to introduce the main estimates of the Department of Finance for the fiscal year 2002-2003. The Department of Finance, through its responsibilities for revenue generation and management and information gathering and distribution, plays an important role in ensuring the government is able to deliver its programs and make informed decisions.

In Towards a Better Tomorrow, the Legislative Assembly laid out a vision and goals for the Northwest Territories. The outcome and strategies of the Department of Finance for the upcoming fiscal year support these goals, with particular emphasis on those relating to the NWT's fiscal and economic circumstances, including federal-territorial relations and resource development.

The first goal of the department is to achieve a fiscal regime for the Northwest Territories that supports a stable political environment and a strong economy. Key strategies of the department towards achieving this goal include:

- Beginning discussions with Finance Canada on changes to the post-2004 formula financing agreement;
- Providing taxation and formula financing input to resource revenue sharing discussions with Canada and aboriginal governments;
- Implementing the personal income tax changes recommended by the Minister's Advisory Committee if approved by the Legislative Assembly;

- Continuing fiscal and taxation input to self-government negotiations; and
- Initiating facility appraisal and risk assessment processes to improve the government's insurance protection.

The second goal of the department is to ensure the government has the fiscal and statistical information and analysis needed to support policy development and decision making, particularly for key social and economic initiatives. Good information will allow us as policy makers to make better decisions about fiscal, economic and social policy.

The key strategies the department has identified towards achieving this goal include analyzing and disseminating 2001 census data and continuing to improve the range and quality of statistical information available.

Finally, as its third goal, the department seeks to be more responsive to client needs. Key supportive strategies include among others: improving awareness about liquor licenses, payroll tax, risk management insurance and improving agreements with investment pool participants.

For 2002-2003, the Department of Finance is requesting a total expenditure budget of \$7,766,000, or 17.5 percent less than in 2001-2002. The decrease is due to an improved revenue outlook for 2001-2002, which will affect our forecast borrowing requirements for 2002-2003 and therefore our estimates of interest costs.

However, lower interest cost estimates are partially offset by a higher forecast requirements for insurance costs resulting from industry-wide increases and premiums. These increases were forecast even prior to September 11<sup>th</sup>, based on the declining performance of the investment sector. Post-September 11<sup>th</sup>, the insurance market has hardened further. As a result, estimated insurance costs included in the main estimates have risen by \$1,090,000 over the 2001-2002 main estimates amount.

The expenditure budget in the main estimates is accompanied by a departmental revenue budget of \$781,558,000, an increase of 5.2 percent over 2001-2002 main estimates. The 2002-2003 amount represents about 91 percent of the total government revenues. In addition, our forecast for 2001-2002 Department of Finance revenues has been substantially revised. We are now forecasting revenues of \$911,550,000 for 2001-2002. I would be pleased to respond to any questions the committee may have. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Handley. The Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development, Mr. Roland.

**MR. ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Department of Finance is responsible for obtaining the financial resources to carry on the functions of government, for intergovernmental fiscal negotiation and arrangements, for regulating the insurance industry, and for controlling the sale of liquor in the Northwest Territories.

The Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development met with the Minister of Finance and his staff on

Wednesday, January 16, 2002 to review the Department of Finance's 2002-2003 draft main estimates.

The committee noted a net decrease in the department's operations expenditures in the amount of \$1,236,000. This net decrease is attributed to a \$500,000 increase in forced growth reflecting the forecasted increase in insurance premiums for government assets; and a \$1,736,000 reduction in other subsequent FMB approvals as the result of decreases in the government's short-term interest expenses. The Department of Finance did not have any capital expenditures.

### Financial Reporting and Forecasting

Timely and accurate financial reporting and forecasting continue to be significant concerns for the standing committee. The financial health of the government is of primary importance for members of the public and the Legislative Assembly. Without effective reporting and forecasting, an accurate picture of the government's financial health is difficult.

For example, last year, the government received what they referred to as a "one-time" net corporate tax windfall of \$16 million. This year, the government reported that it would receive another "one-time" net corporate tax windfall in the amount of \$87 million from the same filer. This comes from the GNWT response to the Standing Committee Report on 2002-2005 Business Plans, Financial Management Board, January 11, 2002.

The committee is aware that corporate tax filers, like individual filers, are required by the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency, or CCRA, to make at least monthly instalments on their projected tax payable. This tax payable is based on a corporation's or an individual's forecasted income for the upcoming tax year, or on their income from the past year, whichever is less. Non-payment or underpayment of taxes payable would incur expensive interest penalties. In light of this tax requirement, it is possible that the government would have been aware of any large corporate tax windfalls well in advance.

During the review of the department, the Minister remarked that if he had been informed that there was additional money on its way, he would alert the committee right away but that he did not expect anything for the next couple of months.

Committee members found it coincidental then that the government reported corporate tax windfalls on the first day in each of the Standing Committee's reviews of the Government's 2001-2004 and 2002-2005 business plans. The government, in both instances, had explained that they were notified either that morning or the day before by the CCRA. A few members noted that if the Minister had been informed at the last minute of any corporate or other tax revenue windfalls by the CCRA, why would he state that he did not expect anything for the next couple of months? Some members added that if the department was not notified in a timely manner, this may draw into question the condition of this government's working relationship with the federal government.

In short, good information is the foundation for good decisions. Accounting systems are an important source of this information. These issues are especially important, given this government's increasingly difficult financial circumstances. These concerns were conveyed to the government in the

committee's report on the review of the 2001-2002 main estimates and the committee's response to the government on the review of the 2002-2005 business plans.

### Resource Revenue Sharing

The committee suggested the establishment of a heritage fund similar to Alberta's. The Minister replied that it may be impractical at this time as most of the revenues from oil, gas, and diamonds go to the federal government. The Minister stated that hopefully after devolution, the NWT will see better revenues and for now, it may be more productive to invest in people and infrastructure.

The Minister apprised the committee that the NWT will never reach a resource revenue sharing agreement similar to Alberta's. Alberta keeps 100 percent of the revenues arising from resource extraction. The department further stated that the NWT would be lucky to keep 50 to 60 percent. Some provinces, like Nova Scotia, only get to keep 30 percent of their oil and gas revenues.

Committee members suggested that in order to improve on negotiations with the federal government, the NWT must develop a position, quantify potential revenues, study what has resulted in other jurisdictions, and develop options and alternatives.

### Expansion of Banking Services to More Communities

Banking services are limited in most NWT communities. The committee would like to see more effort from the government to encourage banks to set up services such as automatic teller machines, or ATMs, in the communities. The establishment and the improvement of banking services would allow for bill payments and the disbursement of payroll and income support payments in the communities.

In response to the committee's concerns, the Minister replied that in the next call for proposals for banking services, the department will ensure banks develop a northern specific banking regime and improve their services in communities to include ATMs and other services.

### Statistics

Committee members would like the GNWT to improve its statistics work to ensure federal statistics such as population surveys are accurate, as a significant component of our formula financing agreement is dependent upon the result. The department should undertake steps to increase the use of our own Bureau of Statistics and northern firms to ensure that statistics remain current and accurate.

The Minister replied the NWT Bureau of Statistics has only seven staff, but he agreed with the committee regarding the increased use of northern firms. The committee and the Minister were of the position that northern firms are more than capable of doing many of the surveys and this would also ensure a higher level of consistency in the compilation of statistics.

### Liquor Act

Some committee members would like to see more of the income generated from liquor sales be directed towards alcohol and drug programs. The Minister replied that this income is

transferred to the GNWT's Consolidated Revenue Fund, which in turn puts some of its money into social programs, including alcohol and drug programs.

The committee will undertake to examine the most current government review of the Liquor Act, review the current act and then provide its concerns and recommendations to the Minister. The Minister agreed that he would consider any input made by the committee.

Mr. Chairman, that concludes the Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development's report on the draft main estimates of the Department of Finance. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Roland. Would the Minister care to bring in witnesses? Mr. Handley.

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Yes, I would. Thank you.

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you. Sergeant-at-Arms, would you please escort the witnesses in? Mr. Minister, for the record, would you please introduce your witnesses?

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Chairman, with me are Margaret Melhorn, deputy minister of Finance, and Bill Setchell, director of finance and administration for the Department of Finance. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Handley. General comments? Mr. Bell.

**MR. BELL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just a couple of questions about the Minister's opening remarks. As he laid out the goals of the department, I did have some questions that needed a little bit of clarification. I wanted to ask about the third goal, the departmental attempt to be more responsive to client needs. The suggestion that key supported strategies include, among others, improving awareness about the payroll tax. I am wondering if the Minister could speak to that and indicate whether or not he feels possibly that companies are not aware that they are supposed to be paying payroll tax, are not aware of how much the payroll tax is, these kinds of things.

I am wondering if he can speak to what we mean when we are talking about improving awareness with regard to the payroll tax.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Bell. Mr. Handley.

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Chairman, a couple of things. First of all, there probably are some employers who come into the Northwest Territories for the first time to work as subcontractors, or for short periods of time on various projects and so on, in oil and gas and other areas where we have an increasing number who are here for the first time, who may not be aware of the requirements. We want to do more to ensure they know what their obligations are on payroll tax, as well as other areas. We would like to be more visible out there, either in person or through correspondence or through phone or any way to work with these people, rather than allowing them to go along and then finding them later on. We would sooner be more proactive on that one. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mr. Bell.

**MR. BELL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Maybe the Minister could give me his assessment of whether or not we have a good sense of if we are collecting all of the payroll tax that we are supposed to be collecting, and if we have any sort of information on a year-to-year basis that lets us know if we are not collecting it all, if we are in fact getting better? Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Bell. Mr. Handley.

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Chairman, I think we are collecting most of it. I cannot say we are collecting all of it. Certainly we have not become aware of any larger companies that are not paying the payroll tax. As I say, there are always the smaller companies that are here for brief periods of time that we may find out about. There is no evidence that we are missing a large number. I would like to believe we are doing better than we used to, I think just in getting the information out. We have improved that side of it a fair bit. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mr. Bell.

**MR. BELL:** Thank you. I could be mistaken, but I think I remember last year, the Department of Finance put a couple of additional auditors on the payroll in order to audit the payroll tax and make sure we were in fact collecting it. I am wondering if the Minister can tell me if I am remembering correctly and if in fact that is making a difference.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Bell. Mr. Handley.

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Chairman, we had one additional auditor put on staff last year. We do not have any sort of dollar amount to quantify the impact of this one additional position, but we have the capacity to do more audits. In total, 15 audits were performed. We have seen an increase in tobacco and petroleum products in payroll tax revenues by 13 percent overall from 1999-2000, so that could be partly from collecting better information. It might also be from increased spending.

I think that kind of signal probably tells us we are doing a little bit of a better job of collecting more of the payroll tax owed to us.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mr. Bell.

**MR. BELL:** Thank you. When employers are negligent in remitting payroll tax, do we charge them interest?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Bell. Mr. Handley.

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Chairman, there are provisions in the legislation for that. We are not aware of having charged interest recently.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mr. Bell.

**MR. BELL:** Okay, so we have provisions in the legislation that allow us to charge interest when people are negligent, late, et cetera. I mean, I know Revenue Canada has these kinds of provisions and is quick to use them. I would imagine that it is (a), lucrative for the federal government and (b), sends a pretty clear message to people who are late in remitting that the government is serious about doing it.

If we have the provision in our legislation, but in fact we do not really do it, I wonder what kind of a message we send to employers. I would tend to think that if somebody has to let some bills go and be negligent on something, this would be the one to be negligent on, because if you can remit eight months at a time, or let these things slide, then I really do not know how serious we seem to employers who are out there, especially some of these operations who come up to work for six months and may not be aware of the payroll tax and then leave again.

I would think that people would become much more aware if there were penalties for skipping remitting the payroll tax. In the past, I have made mention that I thought the payroll tax should probably be raised so that employers would take it seriously and we could generate a significant amount of revenue from some of these companies that come in and operate for short periods of time and then head back to the south, that are not really located in the North, or employees who fly up here to work and then leave again.

I would think with the recent census data coming out, showing that maybe we have assumed that all this economic activity has meant that there are a lot more people in the Northwest Territories, maybe it is not such a revelation that a lot of this activity might be fly-in/fly-out. I think it might be time for this Minister to reassess his options when it comes to the payroll tax and start to look at some of the things that have been run up the flagpole in the past but dismissed for various reasons.

I guess my point is that I am not convinced that we take our payroll tax seriously and therefore that anybody else does. I hope the Minister would be amenable to taking a look at our strategy here. I think it is important for us to figure out what we are trying to do. We should not just have a 1 percent payroll tax because we have had it and we have set up the administration. There should be an end goal here, something we are trying to achieve. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Bell. Mr. Handley.

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think the advice is good. We do want to have a balance between focusing on finding out where our payroll tax is not being paid, in whole or in part, collecting that payroll tax and then getting on to other things we need to do in terms of audits and other functions.

The balance between that and charging interest and spending a lot of time collecting a little bit of money from a few people who may not be paying their interest, as I said, we have not found any big violators. The ones we are finding are generally smaller in size and usually, they are willing to do a correction of their books and pay us what they owe us. We want to balance that with a punitive side.

We are, Mr. Chairman, committed to doing a fairly thorough spot audit on a larger company in the Territories within the next months, just to assess whether or not that company or sub-contractors working in that situation may be ducking out, see what the example is there.

So far, we are not finding and we do not believe there is a lot of payroll tax being lost. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mr. Bell.

**MR. BELL:** I thank the Minister for that response and I would certainly expect that it probably is some of the smaller employers that we may be missing. I am not suggesting we get all crazy and bent out of shape about chasing around a few dollars that the small employers may not be remitting, but I do think if we are going to do this and we are going to have a payroll tax, maybe we make it something slightly more substantial so that we can in fact generate some revenue from these fly-in/fly-out operations who are operating in the North, possibly employing southerners and leaving, and the money does not revolve in the North. Let's take a stab at getting some of this money.

I agree. We do not want to chase down a few bucks from small employers. Let's make it a few more bucks and chase it down from southern employers who are taking advantage of our lack of initiative in setting up something more substantial.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Bell. Mr. Handley.

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Chairman, particularly if the preliminary census information is verified and we find that there are a larger number of fly-in/fly-out kind of operations who are not paying their taxes and living here, then we really have to reconsider our 1 percent payroll tax and whether it is doing what it was meant to do. I am open to that. Certainly it will be influenced by what we find out on the census information.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Handley. General comments?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Detail.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** We are on page 39, directorate, operations expense, total operations expense, \$1,185,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Page 3-11, treasury, operations expense, total operations expense, \$5,251,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Page 3-15, fiscal policy, operations expense, total operations expense, \$770,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Page 3-17, Bureau of Statistics, operations expense, total operations expense, \$560,000. Mr. Roland.

**MR. ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the committee raised an issue with the Minister, and the Minister did agree that in the Northwest Territories, we need to start making more use of northern firms. The committee is concerned to start to try and make more use of our own Bureau of Statistics. In light of the recent census from the federal government and their numbers, I think much concern has been raised by yourself and ourselves here. For example, looking at those numbers, I know Inuvik has not dropped to the number they have. I do not think we have been that low since the 1970s.

It is much of a concern and emphasizes the fact that we are going to need to do something that we can counter, I guess, what the federal government would do and say, are their

numbers accurate? In this area, is there going to be an increase to try and make more use of our own Northern professionals? Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Handley.

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Chairman, as I mentioned in a Minister's statement a couple of days ago, we are asking the Stats Canada people to do a complete review of all communities in the Northwest Territories and to include our people in the review. If we are not successful with that, we really have to look at the way statistics are collected in the North generally and get much harder, much firmer with Ottawa that it is necessary to do it with Northerners. I am getting a lot of antidotal information from people who are telling me their stories about why they did not fill out the census form and so on over the last few days.

There is a lot of scepticism when southern people come north and start asking a lot of questions. Some people are just throwing the forms away. We will see how we can work with Statistics Canada. We want to work with them. They do provide a valuable service to us but we have to have a better way of getting our bureau and northern people involved in this process. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mr. Roland.

**MR. ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Does the Minister see that in this area, we would be looking to increase our own staff or the amount of statistics that we gather, or the frequency of that? Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Handley.

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Yes, Mr. Chairman. If we find the information that Statistics Canada is collecting is inaccurate or inadequate, then we would be considering coming back, either through the business planning process or, if necessary, if it is urgent, as a supp to get some more resources for us to be able to do it better ourselves. We cannot continue on with information that is highly questionable.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mr. Roland.

**MR. ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That is all in this area. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Ms. Lee.

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On that point to do with the latest Stats Canada information, I wonder for next time, if we should consider hiring our own people in communities to help with this process, if they are sceptical about forms coming to their door or whatever. Every one of these numbers is revenue for us. It may be a good investment to have somebody work in the community four or six weeks, or however long the census period, is to explain what this is and why it is important that they fill it out. Would the Minister consider doing something like that?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Handley.

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Chairman, I would certainly consider it and I hope the next time around, we can work out an arrangement with Statistics Canada to do it. Having said that though, Statistics Canada has been pretty adamant that they want to collect the data in a consistent way right across the country. They would not want each jurisdiction doing it on its own. It is going to take a bit of persuasion to get them to get off their present system.

I suspect we are going to find that this last census, which was managed by a person from outside of the Territories, where Stats Canada set the salary level for people who did the surveys and it was very low. They had a lot of trouble collecting information. I was speaking to one of the people this morning who dropped into my office to talk to me about it. It was just full of problems when they did it.

Maybe there is some willingness to look at the North differently, particularly aboriginal communities, than they do in the rest of Canada. I would like to work with Statistics Canada to do that, not fight with them, if we can do it. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Handley. Ms. Lee.

**MS. LEE:** I think I should make it clearer as to what I meant. It is probably going to be difficult to try and convince them that we will do our own census and they should use our information. That is not what I meant. What I meant was we could have a community worker prior to census coming. Like an ad, posters, community meetings. Communities in the North are pretty small. Maybe band councils could get involved. Maybe during a drum-dance, somebody could explain census is coming and explain the importance of it.

I remember when census people were coming around my neighbourhood, it was inconvenient. They had to track me down. I had to be there and you had to fill out a really long form. They asked questions that I did not even want to answer.

If it is just another government form coming in the mail and you do not understand the relevance of it or why does it impact me, it is easy for people to throw it in the garbage.

I do not know exactly how it is done in the communities, if they go door to door. I am not saying that NWT people replace census people, but perhaps the NWT people could go with census people as a guide, as a friendly mediator, so they know they are doing it for us. The community people will feel easy with them. Or doing a campaign prior to it. For example, the GNWT census is coming. This is done by the federal government. This will determine how much money we will get for roads, hospitals or whatever. It is really important that everyone of you gets counted and do it in aboriginal languages. Surely this is a very important thing for our financial well-being. That is what I meant, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Handley.

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Chairman, I think I am saying the same thing as Ms. Lee. I am not saying we will do our own and hand them the data, but we need to have Northerners working with Stats Canada. Stats Canada, from what I can gather, follow much the same system in small communities in the North as they do in small communities in the south. They knock on the door. If people answer, they will try to fill out the form with them. If they are not home, they hang it on a doorknob and ask

that you send it in. That does not work in our communities. We need to convince them that we will work with them to get a way that is more effective that does not distort their statistics in the long run. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mr. Bell.

**MR. BELL:** Thank you. I guess I have a couple of concerns here. As Ms. Lee has pointed out, it is unlikely that Stats Canada is interested in us counting our own heads. I think they need to be independent. They need to be seen as objective. I am sure that every jurisdiction in the country would like to do its own count.

I know from talking to people on the street, and I feel the same way, you almost want to will the population to go up. You want something to cheer for. You certainly do not want to hear that the population is dipping because it is going to really impact the kinds of programs and services you can deliver.

It is one thing to say that Stats Canada does not have an accurate method of counting the population in the Northwest Territories or in the North because of the specific challenges of small communities. Unless I were convinced that they somehow changed their methodology this last time around, I would suspect they have been doing it in the same manner for years and years and years. Therefore, there have always been the problems that they have now.

I read in the news that the last time they did it, they were 2 percent or some 2.5 percent out. Even if you look at this data again, their recent calculations and assume they are 2 or 5 percent out, there is still not the kind of growth that we have anticipated or that we feel is happening in some of the larger communities that I am familiar with.

I guess my questions would be around whether or not we have some indication that Stats Canada has changed their methodology. If they are slightly wrong this time, I would assume they have always been slightly wrong in the same manner, unless I learned that they have somehow changed their methodology. Can the Minister comment on that?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Bell. Mr. Handley.

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Chairman, it is true that they have been doing census for years and have generally been following the same methods. There has always been an under count, and they do come back and they are coming back now and doing an assessment of the under coverage.

I would have to say that this last census, on the experience of the people who have been around a long time in this business, was particularly problematic. We were hearing issues last summer that we brought to Stats Canada's attention, where we knew they were missing whole areas or they were missing half a community because people were not home and so on. I do not think it is a new problem but it is more magnified than it has been in the past.

It could be, and I am from Saskatchewan, so I do not blame Saskatchewan people, but I understand the man in charge of it was from Saskatchewan, he had a budget to work with, he paid so much an hour to workers and they had to do so many homes. He had those problems to deal with.

I think we have to look at that and get some flexibility from Stats Canada the next time. It may take a little bit longer to get the information than it would in southern Alberta, but it has to be done with the same level of thoroughness.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mr. Bell.

**MR. BELL:** Thank you. I think the Minister is taking the right approach here in asking that our own Stats Bureau take a look at these things. I want to say I feel like we are desperate to see these numbers go up. I sense that in listening to our officials talk about this. I feel that myself, but I would just hope that we are not putting all our eggs into this basket and that we are ready to talk about what if; what if Stats Canada did a count that was only 2.5 or 3 percent out? I think we have to accept that may be a very real possibility. If it is, we are going to have to talk about what we need to do with bureau resources the next time around. I think it would be irresponsible not to plan for that kind of thing.

I do agree that if there are concerns, and it sounds like there are, about the methodology used and the way it was done, we need to address it and we need to look into it. I would hope that we are not counting on something like a 10 percent under coverage. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Bell. Mr. Handley.

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Chairman, we are going to work hard with Stats Canada to start with on this one. If we still feel that we are not getting the information that we feel is accurate, then I am prepared to propose back to my colleagues in Cabinet that we in fact go out and do some surveys ourselves in some communities, just to have the information ourselves, to assure ourselves that we are right. If this does not work, we will go out and get some of our own data.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Handley. Page 3-17, Bureau of Statistics, operations expense, total operations expense, \$560,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Page 3-18, information item, active positions.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Page 3-19, detail of work performed on behalf of others, total department, \$3,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Page 3-20, liquor commission revolving fund.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Page 3-21, information item, liquor commission revolving fund, active positions.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Page 3-22, revenues, recoveries and transfer payments.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** We will go back to page 3-7, department summary, Finance, operations expense, total operations expense, \$7,766,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Does the committee agree that this concludes consideration of the main estimates for the Department of Finance?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you, Mr. Minister, and your witnesses for appearing. The Chair is going to call a short break before we go into the next department.

-- Break

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** I will call the committee of the whole back to order. We are here with the Legislative Assembly. Mr. Speaker, do you have any opening comments?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, thank you, colleagues. It is a pleasure to be back here in front of you again. I am very pleased to present the 2002-2003 proposed main estimates for the Legislative Assembly.

We are requesting \$14,047,000 for the operating expenses of the Legislative Assembly for the coming fiscal year. Our appropriations also include a capital component of \$445,000 for enhancements and upgrading of our security and risk management system, which I will address further along in my statement today.

Mr. Chairman, I think it is important to indicate that the Board of Management, in preparing the business plans and main estimates, is guided by the input of Members and I hope is responsive to your needs. Ultimately, their direction determines the level of financial and human resources necessary to provide services to Members and oversee the day-to-day administration of the Legislative Assembly Offices. The board and the Clerk's office are always looking for ways to improve the quality of its services, and we remain committed to providing those services in a cost-effective, open, transparent and accountable manner, which is what the people of the Northwest Territories deserve and expect of its elected Assembly.

I would like to remind Members that the appropriations of the Legislative Assembly provide funding for the statutory officers of the Assembly. Funding is provided to the Offices of the Languages Commissioner, Conflict of Interest Commissioner, Information and Privacy Commissioner and the Chief Electoral Officer.

The main estimates before you today, Mr. Chairman, contain a number of forced growth items including:

- \$225,000 for the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer, to gear up for the general election in the fall of 2003;
- \$145,000 for enhancement to the Members Constituency Assistant Program and our Pages Program;
- \$96,000 for enhancements to a number of our information systems; and finally,

- \$36,000 overall increase to Members Constituency budgets, which is now tied to the consumer price index.

Mr. Chairman, new funding has also been identified in the main estimates to assist the Special Committees on the Review of the Official Languages Act and the Implementation of Self-Government and the Sunset Clause in carrying out their mandates. Both committees will complete their respective mandates before the end of our term. I did note with interest that the Minister of Finance, in his Budget Address, recognized the importance of the work of the Special Committee on the Review of the Official Languages Act.

New funding is also being requested to increase and enhance the support provided to the House, standing committees and public information services. A notable amount of this funding will go to the initiative for the development and implementation of a cultural enhancement program for the Legislative Assembly building and Capital Park.

Mr. Chairman, I indicated earlier on that the Legislative Assembly is seeking funding to make improvements to security services within the Legislative Assembly building and grounds. A risk and threat assessment for overall security was undertaken and indicated that improvements are required to adequately address existing and potential threats.

Security is a sensitive matter and it is important to try and achieve a balance between the perceived likelihood of threat with the costs associated with guarding against those threats. In order to achieve that balance, I am prepared to accept a \$220,000 reduction to the security proposal contained in the main estimates.

Mr. Chairman and colleagues, when issues arise concerning the cost of running the Legislative Assembly, comments invariably seem to focus on how much our elected MLAs are being paid and little seems to be made of the numerous other initiatives and programs that this Assembly is responsible for. Granted, a large amount of our financial and human resources go to services provided to Members, but equally important are those services that are provided to government departments, employees and the general public. Thousands of people annually, Mr. Chairman, visit the Legislative Assembly building. This does not include individuals that attend as government employees or visitors to Members.

The combined number of daily public tours and summer Capital Park walking tours totals 240 annually. This does not include special tours for the 117 visiting dignitaries from Canada and other countries, or the tours conducted by my office for over 90 members of the public.

Throughout the year, we also host several special events, including the kindergarten Christmas tree decorating, Lights Across Canada and the seniors tea. We are also very proud of our sponsorship of the Youth Parliament. Our third Youth Parliament concluded in February of this year and it is clearly our most successful educational program, bringing in young people from across the Territory.

Events in the Great Hall and our Caucus Room increased dramatically last year, with 81 events being held in the building. These events bring in people from all walks of life from across the Territory and Canada, which serves to enhance our exposure and promote the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Chairman, the legislative and legislative branch libraries also provide an important service to the people of this Territory. The clientele of the legislative library includes Members and their staff, Legislative Assembly staff, government employees throughout the Northwest Territories, researchers, consultants, media and the general public. In order to provide efficient and effective service to GNWT employees and the general public, the legislative branch library is located downtown on the second floor on the Centre Square Tower, where materials and staff assistance are more accessible to employees.

A major part of the services provided to GNWT employees by the branch library include interlibrary loans, whereby library staff locate, request and receive information and documents from other libraries outside of the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Chairman, the legislative library continues to take on various new tasks that have a broader Assembly focus such as:

- The distribution and preservation of legislative documents, including a project to microfiche legislative documents, dating back to 1951;
- Assisting with the production and distribution of Hansard, which also involves the production of a CD-ROM containing Hansard from the 12<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> Assemblies;
- Performing the records management function by organizing and storing the records of the Legislative Assembly; and
- Responding to questions that are redirected from other departments or received via the government and Legislative Assembly websites.

Mr. Chairman, the broadcasting of our sittings and other significant events on the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network continue to be well received by the public across the Northwest Territories and are proving to be an excellent way of keeping our electorate informed about what we are doing. We broadcast approximately 180 hours annually.

Mr. Chairman, in the fast moving world of instant communication, it is interesting to note the growing importance that the Internet is having in our day-to-day work. Our Legislative Assembly website is a perfect example of how we are integrating technology into our day-to-day operations. During the period of December 31, 2000 to December 31, 2001, there were 3,441,262 hits on our website. Our most frequently viewed pages were our home page with 45,111 hits; the Hansard, with 16,919 viewers; and the general Members information page with 12,607 views. Not only, Mr. Chairman, are we able to track the number of visitors to our individual pages, we are also able to track the most commonly downloaded files, and even geographic regions of the globe that are accessing the site.

Mr. Chairman, I am sure that Members would be interested to discover that we have even compiled a top 50 hit list, which shows whose Members sites are visited most frequently. No special awards for those.

Again, Mr. Chairman and colleagues, the Board of Management has made every effort to address the needs of



the Legislative Assembly and has endeavoured to secure the level of financial and human resources necessary to meet these demands. However, the Board and my offices, like Members, are ultimately responsible for the decisions we make collectively as elected representatives of the people of the Northwest Territories.

I look forward to the Members' comments and questions. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As there was no standing committee to review the Legislative Assembly, would you care to bring in witnesses, Mr. Speaker?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Yes, if it pleases the Chair, I would ask for our Clerk, Mr. Hamilton.

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses in. Mr. Speaker, please introduce your witnesses for the record.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It gives me a great deal of pleasure indeed to introduce on my left side, the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, Mr. David Hamilton; and to my right, Mr. Myles Moreside, director of corporate services. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. General comments. Mr. McLeod.

**MR. MCLEOD:** Mr. Chairman, I just wanted to ask the Speaker if he could clarify what he means when he says he has compiled a top 50 hit list on Members sites. The majority of us do not have sites, if that is what he is referring to. Could he tell us what he is talking about there?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. All of the Members do have biographies on the net and they are often looked at by web surfers. That is what we mean by that.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. General comments. Mr. Roland.

**MR. ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to know, in the area of the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network, the Speaker mentioned 180 hours annually. What is the cost to our government?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** I am informed it is about \$145,000 per year.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Roland.

**MR. ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am impressed, I guess, to know we can get 180 hours across the North. Is that in a number of different languages, or is it strictly English? Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, it comprises of two areas, live to air broadcast of the session during the day, plus rebroadcast in different time slots in different languages.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mrs. Groenewegen.

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Does it cost this government anything for the live broadcast to Yellowknife on the Community Channel?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** No, there is a community channel that is provided by the network here, the CAT channel, Community Access Television, which broadcasts on a space available basis. There is no cost.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mrs. Groenewegen.

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have heard concern expressed on the part of Hay River constituents many times that there is only such a limited amount of access, the one or one-and-a-half hours a day on APTN. I was wondering, if it cannot be simultaneous in other communities, is there any way that videotapes of the sitting of the Legislature could be made available to other community channels, such as the one in Hay River? They can rebroadcast say, the next day? Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, we can do that and we are also looking at another way of doing that. It is called video webcasting. I am not totally familiar with the system, but that is what we are looking at. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mrs. Groenewegen.

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Is this eminent? Is this going to happen or is this just something that is being pondered? Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Well, there are two ways of doing it. The tapes are available, or could be made available immediately. The webcasting may take a little bit of time.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mrs. Groenewegen.

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So right now, there would be nothing stopping the tapes from being couriered to Hay River the following day and rebroadcast on our community channel? Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Yes, Mr. Chairman, we can do that almost immediately.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mrs. Groenewegen.

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Can we start that -- well, I guess tomorrow will not matter because it is over now. Can I tell my constituents that we can start that for the June session? Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, we will start that, the pilot of that for June, not only to Hay River but to any other community that may wish that service.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. General comments. Mr. Lafferty.

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just under the implementation of a cultural enhancement program for the Legislative Assembly Building and Capital Park, we also have security services. I would like to ask a question about safety for emergency vehicles to come in here when we have a big event happening in the Great Hall. Vehicles block the access road because of the narrow width of the roads into the building. Are there any plans for future widening of the roads or extra parking spaces?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. No, there is nothing immediately in the plans, but if you recall last year, we did make some extra parking spots in the parking lot. We moved the handicap spot to the front of the building and then freed up a couple of spots in the main parking lot.

A little bit of the road was widened over by the parking lot, but the main problem seems to be in the wintertime, Mr. Chairman, when there is a lot of snow and they cannot see the sides of the road. Vehicles do not want to get off the road as much. It is a bit of a problem and we have been reluctant to take action against it because we know that people want to come to the Assembly and see events here.

If it gets any worse, I am sure we could have vehicles towed away, but that would not be very popular for Members.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Lafferty.

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Thank you. I would like to ask if we can start monitoring how many vehicles we are getting and the large events that attract all the vehicles here. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That is a very good point the honourable Member makes. We do know already the past events, which ones have been well-received and draw a lot of drivers. We can probably undertake, at special times of the year, to note what the honourable Member is seeking, the number of vehicles that do park on the road and what times,

and see if there is any way we can alleviate some of that congestion.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. General comments. Detail. We are on page 1-9, Office of the Clerk, operations expense, total operations expense, \$8,358,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Page 1-11, Office of the Speaker, operations expense, total operations expense, \$179,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Expenditures on behalf of Members, operations expense, total operations expense, \$4,500,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Office of the Chief Electoral Officer, operations expense, total operations expense, \$522,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Page 1-17, Commissioner of Official Languages, operations expense, total operations expense, \$488,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Page 1-18, information item, active positions.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Page 1-19, detail of work performed on behalf of others, total department, \$20,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Page 1-20, revenues, recoveries and transfer payments. We will go back to page 1-7, department summary, Legislative Assembly, operations expense, total operations expense, \$14,047,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Over to capital acquisition plan, Legislative Assembly, cap-3, Office of the Clerk, total Office of the Clerk, \$445,000. Mr. Dent.

**MR. DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, as the Speaker noted in his opening comments, there has been some discussion about security in the building. The amount of money that was proposed for improved security was discussed by Members for some time, and we have all agreed that we can balance the need for security and the need to keep the building as open as possible for our public to come in and feel comfortable here. We would like to reduce the amount of money that was originally proposed for security spending.

Therefore, Mr. Chairman,

**Committee Motion 18-14(5): To Delete \$220,000 From Legislative Assembly Capital Acquisition Plan (Carried)**

I MOVE that \$220,000 be deleted from the Legislative Assembly capital acquisition plan, Office of the Clerk, in the 2002-2003 main estimates. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Dent. There is a motion on the floor. The motion is order. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried. We will go to total Office of the Clerk, revised figure, \$225,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Total department, revised figure, \$225,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Does the committee agree that concludes the Legislative Assembly?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and your witnesses. We will go to our gray binders and Bill 2. We will defer the preamble. Clause 1.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Clause 2.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Clause 3.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Mr. Handley.

**Committee Motion 19-14(5): To Amend Clause 3(2) of Bill 2, Appropriation Act, 2002-2003 (Carried)**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I MOVE that clause 3(2) of Bill 2 be amended by striking out "\$962,535,000" and by substituting "\$962,065,000". Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Handley. The motion is being circulated. The motion is in order. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried. Clause 3, as amended.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Clause 4.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Clause 5.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Clause 6.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Schedule, part 1, vote 1, operations expenditures, total appropriation for operations expenditures, \$853,238,000. Mr. Handley.

**Committee Motion 20-14(5): To Amend Part 1 of the Schedule to Bill 2, Appropriation Act, 2002-2003 (Carried)**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman,

I MOVE, with regard to Part 1, that the schedule to Bill 2 be amended to:

(a) decrease by \$250,000 the appropriation amount set out in part 1, item 2, "Executive", by:

(i) striking out "\$50,837,000" and by substituting "\$50,587,000"; and

(ii) striking out "\$52,022,000" and by substituting "\$51,772,000"; and

(b) decrease by \$250,000 the amount set out in part 1 as "TOTAL APPROPRIATION FOR OPERATIONS EXPENDITURES" by striking out "\$853,238,000" and by substituting "\$852,988,000"

Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Handley. I believe the motion has been circulated. There is 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. Part 1 as amended.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Part 2, vote 2, capital investment expenditures, total appropriation for capital investment expenditures, \$109,297,000. Mr. Handley.

**Committee Motion 21-14(5): To Amend Part 2 of the Schedule to Bill 2, Appropriation Act, 2002-2003 (Carried)**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Chairman,

I MOVE that the schedule to Bill 2 be amended to:

(a) decrease by \$220,000 the appropriation amount set out in part 2, item 12, "Legislative Assembly", by striking out "\$445,000" and by substituting "\$225,000"; and

(b) decrease by \$220,000 the amount set out in part 2 as "TOTAL APPROPRIATION FOR CAPITAL INVESTMENT EXPENDITURES", by striking out "\$109,297,000" and by substituting "\$109,077,000".

Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Handley. I believe the motion has been circulated. The motion is in order. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried. Part 2, as amended?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Total appropriation, \$962,535,000. Mr. Handley.

**Committee Motion 22-14(5): To Amend the Total Appropriation of the Schedule to Bill 2, Appropriation Act, 2002-2003 (Carried)**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Chairman,

I MOVE that the schedule to Bill 2 be amended to decrease by \$470,000 the amount set out at the end of the schedule as "TOTAL APPROPRIATION" by striking out "\$962,535,000" and by substituting "\$962,065,000".

Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Handley. The motion has been circulated. The motion is in order. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried. Total appropriation, as amended?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Total appropriation, \$962,065,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** We will go back to page 1, preamble.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Bill 2, as amended?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Does the committee agree that Bill 2 is ready for third reading as amended?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Bill 2 is ready for third reading as amended. Does the committee agree that consideration of Committee Reports 1-14(5), 2-14(5) and 3-14(5) is also concluded?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** We will go to Bill 4, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act. Mr. Steen, do you have any comments?

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and colleagues. As a member of the Board of Management representing the Executive Council, I am pleased to introduce Bill 4, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, on behalf of the board.

The bill, Mr. Chairman, amends sections of the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act as a result of the recommendations of the October 2001 Report of the Independent Commission on Members Compensation. Members will recall that the House approved the recommendations, and the bill before you implements those decisions.

These amendments provide for:

- the reimbursement for travel for five additional trips annually to Yellowknife from the home community for a person in the Member's family;
- the annual change to the constituency work allowance based on the consumer price index;
- the establishment of an independent commission to consider Members' compensation; and
- an increase in the indemnity paid to Chairs of standing committees and an indemnity for Chairs of special committees.

Mr. Chairman, I would be pleased, with the assistance of officials, to answer questions.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Steen. Would you be bringing in any witnesses, Mr. Steen?

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Yes, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you. Sergeant-at-Arms, would you escort the witness in please? For the record, Mr. Minister, could you introduce the witnesses please?

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Mr. Chairman, I have Diane Buckland, legislative counsel for the Department of Justice; and David Hamilton, Clerk of the Assembly.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Steen. General comments. Detail. Clause 1.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Clause 2.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Clause 3.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Clause 4.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Page 2, clause 5.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Clause 6.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Clause 7.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Bill as a whole?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Does committee agree that Bill 4 is ready for third reading?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Bill 4 is now ready for third reading. Thank you, Mr. Minister, and your witnesses. We will go on to Bill 10, An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act. Does the Minister responsible for the bill have any opening comments? Mr. Handley.

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Chairman, Bill 10 amends the Income Tax Act to implement the changes I announced in the Budget Address February 20<sup>th</sup>. As I noted then, when the NWT changed its personal income tax system to a tax on income approach in 2001, we created the opportunity to set tax rates and introduce credits that more accurately reflect NWT needs and values.

In 2001, concurrent with the process of adopting tax on income, I established the Minister's Advisory Committee on Personal Income Taxation to provide recommendations on how our personal income tax system could be improved, both to enhance the competitiveness of the NWT economy and to address the needs of NWT residents.

In addition, during debate in the Legislative Assembly last July on amendments to increase the cost of living tax credit, Members pointed out the need for further action to address the impact of the cost of living on seniors, disabled persons and other Northerners on low and fixed incomes.

Members also called for measures to be implemented in the 2002 and subsequent tax years.

In October, the advisory committee provided a report on the options available to the GNWT, including specific recommendations for seniors, persons with disabilities and low-income residents. This bill implements the recommendations of the advisory committee and will lower personal income taxes for all NWT taxpayers.

This bill will increase four NWT non-refundable tax credit amounts; the personal amount, the married amount, the age amount and the disability amount. The personal amount will increase from its current level of \$7,634 to \$9,342 for 2002, and to \$11,050 for 2003. This will reduce the tax burden for all NWT taxpayers.

The married amount will increase to the same level as the proposed personal amount by 2003, thereby eliminating the difference between a married couple and two individual tax filers living together.

By 2003, the married amount will rise from its current level of \$6,482 to \$11,050. The married amount may be claimed by taxpayers claiming married or equivalent to marriage status on their tax returns.

Increasing the age amount will provide tax relief for our low-income seniors. The age amount will increase from \$3,728 to \$4,566 for 2002 and to \$5,405 for 2003. As under the calculation of federal income tax, the age amount will be phased out at a rate of 15 percent of income over a particular income threshold. The amount at which the credit is reduced to zero will rise from \$52,602 in 2002 to \$64,337 in 2003.

The disability tax credit will provide tax assistance to people with severe and prolonged disabilities. The disability amount will increase from its current level of \$6,180 to \$7,570 in 2002, and to \$8,961 for 2003. A person claiming the disability amount

may be able to transfer all or part of the amount to a spouse or common law partner, or to another supporting person.

The advisory committee also recommended implementing a minimum cost of living tax credit. The new minimum \$250 cost of living tax credit for 2002 will provide additional relief from high northern living costs for low-income taxpayers.

The minimum amount for a couple will be based on a couple's income and will be claimed by only one individual of a married couple. Single taxpayers will be eligible for a minimum credit of \$250, while married couples will be eligible for \$500. This increased tax credit will be paid to eligible taxpayers in early 2003, when 2002 income tax returns are assessed.

These changes to our personal income tax system are important. They will not only benefit seniors, disabled persons and low-income taxpayers, but will allow the NWT to remain competitive with other provincial jurisdictions. These tax reductions respond to NWT residents concerns about the cost of living in the North, especially for low-income individuals and families. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Handley. Does the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight have any comments on the bill? Mr. Dent.

**MR. DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight conducted a public review of Bill 10, An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act, on March 12, 2002. The committee would like to thank the Minister of Finance and his officials for presenting the bill. The bill would increase NWT non-refundable tax credit for the personal, married, age, and disability amounts.

The bill will also implement a new minimum \$250 cost of living tax credit for the 2002 and subsequent tax years. These amendments will reduce the tax burden for all NWT taxpayers.

Mr. Chairman, during discussion on the bill, the committee was concerned about the clawback from tax filers on income support and multiple filers residing in a single residence. Committee members expressed concern that income support clients may not actually realize any benefit from the new minimum \$250 cost of living tax credit.

Most types of income received by income support clients are clawed back by the government under the program guidelines established by the Department of Education, Culture and Employment. The committee questioned the cost effectiveness of this amendment, as a number of low-income earners are on income support. The clawback would not render additional revenue for those that need it the most. The Minister assured the committee that the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment is evaluating potential changes to the Income Support Program.

Amendments to the Income Tax Act will provide a new minimum cost of living tax credit based on the income of the individual and his or her spouse or common law partner. Committee members were concerned that due to a shortage of affordable housing in many of our communities, in some cases many unrelated people may reside under the same roof. The committee sought clarification from the Minister on the application on the tax credit. The department advised that regardless of how many people reside in a single residence, the minimum cost of living tax credit is allocated based on the

income of the individual and his or her spouse or common law partner.

Mr. Chairman, following the committee's review, a motion was carried to report Bill 10, An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act, to the Assembly as ready for committee of the whole. Additional comments or questions from members may be posed as we proceed. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Dent. Would the Minister like to bring in any witnesses? Mr. Handley.

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Yes, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Sergeant-at-Arms, would you please escort the witnesses in? Mr. Minister, for the record, would you please introduce your witnesses?

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On my right is Margaret Melhorn, deputy minister of Finance. On my left, Patricia Gall-Smith, legal counsel with the Department of Justice. Also with me is John Monroe, director of fiscal policy. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Handley. General comments? Detail?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Detail.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Page 1, clause 1.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Clause 2.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Clause 3.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Page 3, clause 4.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Page 4, clause 5.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Page 5, clause 6.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Clause 7.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Clause 8.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Page 7, clause 9.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Clause 10.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Bill as a whole?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Does the committee agree that Bill 10 is now ready for third reading?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Bill 10 is now ready for third reading. Thank you, Mr. Minister, and your witnesses. Mr. Dent, what is the wish of the committee?

**MR. DENT:** Mr. Chairman, I think we have concluded everything that is on the order paper, so I move we report progress.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Dent. 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. The Chair will rise and report progress.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The House will now come back to order. Item 20, report of the committee of the whole. The honourable Member for Hay River North, Mr. Delorey.

#### ITEM 20: REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

**MR. DELOREY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Bill 2, Bill 4, Bill 10, Committee Report 1-14(5), Committee Report 2-14(5), and Committee Report 3-14(5), and would like to report progress with five motions being adopted and that Committee Report 1-14(5), Committee Report 2-14(5), and Committee Report 3-14(5) are concluded, and that Bill 4 and Bill 10 are ready for third reading, and that Bill 2 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. Delorey. Do we have a seconder for the motion? The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Nitah, seconds the motion. The motion is in order. All those in favour of the motion? Thank you. All those opposed? Thank you. The motion is carried. The chair's attention is drawn to Mr. Bell. Mr. Bell.

**MR. BELL:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to return to item 13, tabling of documents.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you. The honourable Member is seeking unanimous consent to return to item 13, tabling of documents. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Mr. Bell.

#### REVERT TO ITEM 13: TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

**Tabled Document 28-14(5): Standing Committee on Social Programs' Response to the Health and Social Services Action Plan**

**MR. BELL:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to table the Standing Committee on Social Programs' Response to the Health and Social Services Action Plan. This response is the

result of the standing committee's detailed review of the Minister's action plan over the last few weeks. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Bell. Item 13, tabling of documents. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Antoine.

**Tabled Document 29-14(5): Sahtu Dene and Metis Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement, Annual Report of the Implementation Committee, April, 2000 to March 31, 2001**

**HON. JIM ANTOINE:** Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document entitled Sahtu Dene and Metis Comprehensive Land Claims Agreement, Annual Report of the Implementation Committee, April 1, 2000, to March 31, 2001. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Antoine. Item 13, tabling of documents. The honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. Allen.

**Tabled Document 30-14(5): Inuvik Twin Lakes Mid-Term Review**

**HON. ROGER ALLEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table a document entitled Inuvik Twin Lakes Interim Review. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Allen. Item 13, tabling of documents. Item 21, third reading of bills. Order, please. The Chair is having difficulty hearing. Item 21, third reading of bills. The honourable Minister of Finance, Mr. Handley.

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I seek consent to proceed with third reading of Bill 2, Appropriation Act, 2002-2003.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you. The honourable Member is seeking consent to proceed with his bill. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Mr. Handley.

**ITEM 21: THIRD READING OF BILLS**

**Bill 2: Appropriation Act, 2002-2003**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, that Bill 2, Appropriation Act, 2002-2003, be read for the third time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you. We have a motion. The motion is in order. All those in favour of the motion? Thank you. All those opposed? Thank you. The motion is carried. Bill 2 has had third reading. Item 21, third reading of bills. The honourable Member for Nunakput, Mr. Steen.

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Mr. Speaker, I seek consent to proceed with third reading of Bill 4, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you. The honourable Member is seeking consent to deal with Bill 4. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Mr. Steen, you may proceed.

**Bill 4: An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act**

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you colleagues. Mr. Speaker,

I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, that Bill 4, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, be read for the third time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Steen. We have a motion on the floor. The motion is in order. Question has been called. To the motion. All those in favour? Thank you. All those opposed? Thank you. The motion is carried. Bill 4 has had third reading. Item 21, third reading of bills. The honourable Minister of Finance, Mr. Handley.

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, I seek consent to proceed with third reading of Bill 10, An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you. The honourable Member is seeking consent to deal with Bill 10. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Mr. Minister, you may proceed with your bill.

**Bill 10: An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker,

I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Thebacha, that Bill 10, An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act, be read for the third time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Minister. We have a motion on the floor. The motion is in order. Question has been called. All those in favour? Thank you. All those opposed? Thank you. The motion is carried. Bill 10 has had third reading. Item 21, third reading of bills. The Chair recognizes the Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

**MR. BRADEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I seek unanimous consent to return to item 16, motions. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you. The honourable Member is seeking unanimous consent to return to item 16, motions. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Mr. Braden.

**REVERT TO ITEM 16: MOTIONS**

**MR. BRADEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I seek unanimous consent to waive Rule 44 and deal with Motion 914(5) today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you. The honourable Member is seeking unanimous consent to waive Rule 44 and to deal with Motion 914(5) today. Are there any nays? There are no nays. You may proceed, Mr. Braden.

**Motion 9-14(5): Extended Adjournment of the House to June 11, 2002 (Carried)**

**MR. BRADEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Weledeh, that, notwithstanding Rule 4, when this House adjourns on Friday, March 15, 2002, it shall be adjourned until Tuesday, June 11, 2002.

AND FURTHER, that at any time prior to June 11, 2002, if the Speaker is satisfied, after consultation with the Executive Council and Members of the Legislative Assembly, that the public interest requires that the House should meet at an earlier time during the adjournment, the Speaker may give notice and thereupon the House shall meet at the time stated in such notice and shall transact its business as it has been duly adjourned to at that time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Braden. We have a motion. The motion is in order. To the motion. The honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, Mr. Roland.

**MR. ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Yellowknife South, that Motion 9-14(5) be amended by striking out "Friday, March 15, 2002" and substituting "Thursday, March 14, 2002". Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you. We have an amendment and it is in order. To the amendment. Question has been called. All those in favour? Thank you. All those opposed? Thank you. The motion is carried. To the motion, as amended. Question has been called. All those in favour? Thank you. All those opposed? Thank you. The motion, as amended, is carried.

-- Applause

Is there any other business before the House? Mr. Clerk, would you ascertain if Her Honour, the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, is prepared to enter the Chamber and assent to bills?

#### ASSENT TO BILLS

**COMMISSIONER OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES (Hon. Glenna Hansen):** Members of the Legislative Assembly, I would like to thank you for your recent work in this House on behalf of all the people of the Northwest Territories. In our system of government you are often called upon to put aside your differences and to work long days to achieve the consensus that will best serve our people.

Last week I was pleased to have the opportunity to travel to Alaska and take part in Canada Week celebrations marking the relationship between Canada and Alaska. While in Alaska, I was able to speak with the Alaska World Affairs Council about vital economic and cultural ties between the United States and our respective regions.

On International Women's Day I was given the opportunity to speak with students at the University of Alaska. It was my pleasure to share with them examples of the individual accomplishments and milestones that have been reached by our NWT women. I spoke with them about people such as Nellie Cournoyea, Mary Simon, Barb Bromley and the Honourable Ethel Blondin-Andrew -- each great ambassadors for the Northwest Territories and our people.

Unfortunately I was unable to join you here in the Legislative Assembly for the awarding of this year's Wise Women Awards. I would like to take the time now to recognize the work of the five extraordinary individuals who were chosen to receive the Wise Women award this year. Terry Villeneuve, Elizabeth Greenland, Laura Tobac, Jane Dragon and Suzette Montreuil have each, through their wisdom and experience, inspired

others to achieve their dreams and in doing so have provided exceptional role models for our young female leaders of the future.

As a society we must continue to do whatever we can to encourage the young women in our society to take on greater leadership roles at all levels of society.

On Sunday, I will again have the pleasure to represent the people of the Northwest Territories as I join the athletes, officials and fans of all ages in Inuvik for the opening of the Arctic Winter Games. My congratulations go to the athletes, coaches and tireless volunteers and workers who make these games possible.

Now, as the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, I am pleased to assent to the following bills: Bill 2, Appropriation Act, 2002-2003; Bill 4, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act; Bill 7, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly Retiring Allowances Act and the Supplementary Retiring Allowances Act; Bill 9, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 3, 2001-2002; and Bill 10, An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act. Thank you.

-- Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Please be seated. Colleagues, before we get to the last item on the list here, orders of the day, I would like to take this opportunity to say thank you to the staff that have made these few weeks the success that it was, particularly to the pages who have come from out of town to assist us here, as well as from the schools here in Yellowknife, as well as our longest serving page, Vital Manuel. I would like to ask you to join me in saying...

-- Applause

... and of course to the staff at the front table as well who have assisted us, Mr. Schauerte, Mr. Inch and Mr. Hamilton, and to the staff in the back rooms who work so tirelessly to get the orders of the day in place and things that are required. I wish you all well in the next few weeks as you go into your spring events. There are a lot of events taking place that will take you out of the Territories to the Winter Games and across Canada for your various meetings. Have a safe and happy spring break. We look forward to seeing you again when we next meet in June. With that, Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

#### ITEM 22: ORDERS OF THE DAY

**CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton):** Orders of the day for Tuesday, June 11, 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
18. Second Reading of Bills
19. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
20. Report of Committee of the Whole
21. Third Reading of Bills
22. Orders of the Day

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until Tuesday, June 11, 2002, at 1:30 p.m.

-- ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

